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Stories by American Authors.

VII.

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VII.

THE BISHOP'S VAGABOND.
By Octave Thanet.

LOST.
By Edward Bellamy.

KIRBY'S COALS OF FIRE.
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PASSAGES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A SOCIAL WRECK.
By Margaret Floyd.

STELLA GRAYLAND.
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THE IMAGE OF SAN DONATO.
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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1884

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THE BISHOP'S VAGABOND.

By Octave Thanet.

THE Bishop was walking down the wide Aiken street. He was the only bishop in Aiken, and they made much of him, accordingly, though his diocese was in the West, which of course was a drawback.

He was a tall man, with a handsome, kind face under his shovel hat ; portly, as a bishop should be, and having a twinkle of humor in his eye. He dressed well and soberly, in the decorous habiliments of his office. "So English," the young ladies of the Highland Park Hotel used to whisper to each other, admiring him. Perhaps this is the time to mention that the Bishop was a widower.

To-day he walked at a gentle pace, repeatedly lifting his hat in answer to a multitude of salutations ; for it was a bright April day, and the street was thronged. There was the half-humorous in-

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congruity between the people and the place always visible in a place where two thirds of the population are a mere pleasant-weather growth, dependent on the climate. Groups of Northerners stood in the red and blue and green door-ways of the gay little shops, or sauntered past them ; easily distinguished by their clothing and their air of unaccustomed and dissatisfied languor. One could pick out at a glance the new-comers just up from Florida ; they were so decorated with alligator-tooth jewelry, and gazed so contemptuously at the oranges and bananas in the windows. The native Southerners were equally conspicuous, in the case of the men, from their careless dress and placid demeanor. A plentiful sprinkling of black and yellow skins added to the picturesque character of the scene. Over it all hung a certain holiday air, the reason for which one presently detected to be an almost universal wearing of flowers,— bunches of roses, clusters of violets or trailing arbutus, or twigs of yellow jasmine ; while barefooted boys, with dusky faces and gleaming teeth, proffered nosegays at every corner. The Aiken nosegay has this peculiarity, — the flowers are wedged together with unexampled tightness. Truly enough may the little venders boast, " Dey's orful lots o' roses in dem, mister ; you'll fin' w'en you onties 'em." No one of the pedestrians appeared to be in a hurry ; and under all the holiday air of flowers there was a pathetic disproportion of pale and weary faces.

But if they did not hurry on the sidewalk, there was plenty of motion in the street ; horses in Aiken being always urged to their full speed,—which, to be sure, is not alarming. Now, carriages were whirling by and riders galloping in both directions. The riders were of every age, sex, and condition : pretty girls in jaunty riding habits, young men with polo mallets, old men and children, and grinning negroes lashing their sorry hacks with twigs. Of the carriages, it would be hard to tell which was the more noticeable, the smartness of the vehicles or the jaded depression of the thin beasts that pulled them. Where Park and Ashland avenues meet at right angles the crowd was most dense. There, on one side, one sees the neat little post-office and the photographer's gallery, and off in the distance the white pine towers of the hotel, rising out of its green hills ; on the other, the long street slowly climbs the hill, through shops and square white houses with green blinds, set back in luxuriant gardens. At this corner two persons were standing, a young man and a young woman, both watching the Bishop. The young woman was tall, handsome, and—always an attraction in Aiken—evidently not an invalid. The erect grace of her slim figure, the soft and varying color on her cheek, the light in her beautiful brown eyes,—all were the unmistakable signs of health. The young man was a good-looking little fellow, perfectly dressed, and having an expression of indolent amusement on his delicate features. He had

light yellow hair, cut closely enough to show the fine outline of his head, a slight mustache waxed at the ends, and a very fair complexion.

The young woman was speaking. "Do you see to whom my father is talking, Mr. Talboys?" said she.

"Plainly, he has picked up his vagabond."

"Demming? Yes, it *is* Demming."

"Now I wonder, do you know," said the young man, "what induces the Bishop to waste his time on such hopeless moral trash as that." He spoke in a pleasant, slow voice, with an English accent.

"It isn't hopeless to him, I suppose," she answered. Her voice also was slow, and it was singularly sweet.

"I think it must be his sense of humor," he continued. "The Bishop loves a joke, and Demming is a droll fellow. He is a sort of grim joke himself, you know, a high-toned gentleman who lives by begging. He brings his bag to the hotels every day. Of course you have heard him talk, Miss Louise. His strong card is his wife. 'Th' ole 'ooman 's nigh blin',' "—here Talboys gave a very good imitation of the South Carolina local drawl—"'an' she's been so tenderly raised she cyan't live 'thout cyoffee three times a day!'"

"I have heard that identical speech," said Louise, smiling as Talboys knew she would smile over the imitation. "He gets a good deal from the Northerners, I fancy."

"Enough to enable him to be a pillar of the

saloons," said Talboys. "He is a lavish soul, and treats the crowd when he prospers in his profession. Once his money gave out before the crowd's thirst. 'Never min', gen'lemen,' says our friend, 'res' easy. I see the Bishop agwine up the street; I'll git a dollar from him. Yes, wait; I won't be gwine long.'"

"And he got the money?"

"Oh, yes. I believe he got it to buy quinine for 'th' ole 'ooman,' who was down with the break-bone fever. He is like Yorick, 'a fellow of infinite jest'—in the way of lying. He talks well, too. You ought to hear him discourse on politics. As he gets most of his revenue from the North, he is kind enough to express the friendliest sentiments. 'I wuz opposed to the wah's bein'' is his standard speech, 'an' now I'm opposed to its contínnerin'.' For all that, he was a mild kind of Ku-Klux."

"He did it for money, he says," returned Louise. "The funniest thing about him is his absolute frankness after he is found out in any trick. He doesn't seem to have any sense of shame, and will fairly chuckle in my father's face as he is owning up to some piece of roguery."

"You know he was in the Confederate army. Fought well, too, I'm told. What does he do when the Northerners are gone? Aiken must be a pretty bare begging ground."

"Oh, he has a wretched little cabin out in the woods," said Louise, "and a sweet-potato

patch. He raises sweet potatoes and persimmons—"

"And pigs," Talboys interrupted. "I saw some particularly lean swine grubbing about in the sand for snakes. They feed them on snakes, in the pine barrens, you know, which serves two purposes: kills the snakes and fills the pigs. Entertainment for man and beast, don't you see? By the way, talking of being entertained, I know of a fine old Southern manor-house over the bridge."

Louise shook her head incredulously. "I have lost faith in Southern manor-houses. Ever since I came South I have sought them vainly. All the way from Atlanta I risked my life, putting my head out of the car windows, to see the plantations. At every scrubby-looking little station we passed, the conductor would say, 'Mighty nice people live heah; great deal of wealth heah before the wah!' Then I would recklessly put my head out. I expected to see the real Southern mansion of the novelists, with enormous piazzas and Corinthian pillars and beautiful avenues; and the whitewashed cabins of the negroes in the middle distance; and the planter, in a white linen suit and a wide straw hat, sitting on the piazza drinking mint juleps. Well, I don't really think I expected the planter, but I did hope for the house. Nothing of the kind. All I saw was a moderate-sized square house, with piazzas and a flat roof, all sadly in need of paint. Now, I'm like Betsey Prig: 'I

don't believe there's no sich person.' It's a myth, like the good old Southern cooking."

"Oh, they do exist," said Talboys, his eyes brightening over this long speech, delivered in the softest voice in the world. "There are houses in Charleston and Beaufort and on the Lower Mississippi that suggest the novels; but, on the whole, I think the novelists have played us false. We expect to find the ruins of luxury and splendor and all that sort of thing in the South; but in point of fact there was very little luxury about Southern life. They had plenty of service, such as it was, and plenty of horses, and that was about all; their other household arrangements were painfully primitive. All the same, sha'n't we go over the bridge?"

Louise assented, and they turned and went their way in the opposite direction.

Meanwhile, the Bishop and his vagabond were talking earnestly. The vagabond seemed to belong to the class known as "crackers." Poverty, sickness, and laziness were written in every flutter of his rags, in every uncouth curve or angle of his long, gaunt figure and sallow face. A mass of unkempt iron-gray hair fell about his sharp features, further hidden by a grizzly beard. His black frock coat had once adorned the distinguished and ample person of a Northern senator; it wrinkled dismally about Demming's bones, while its soiled gentility was a queer contrast to his nether garments of ragged butternut, his coarse

boots, and an utterly disreputable hat, through a hole of which a tuft of hair had made its way, and waved plume-wise in the wind. Around the hat was wound a strip of rusty crape. The Bishop quickly noticed this woeful addition to the man's garb. He asked the reason.

"She's done gone, Bishop," answered Demming, winking his eyes hard before rubbing them with a grimy knuckle; "th' ole 'ooman's done lef' me 'lone in the worl'. It's an orful 'fliction!" He made so pitiful a figure, standing there in the sandy road, the wind fluttering his poor token of mourning, that the Bishop's kind heart was stirred.

"I am truly sorry, Demming," said he. "Isn't this very sudden?"

"Laws, yes, Bishop, powerful suddint an' onprecedented. 'Pears 's if I couldn't git myself to b'lieve it, nohow. Yes'day ev'nin' she wuz chipper's evah, out pickin' pine buds; an' this mahnin' she woked me up, an' says she, 'I reckon you'd better fix the cyoffee yo'self, Demming, I feel so cu'se,' says she. An' so I did; an' when I come to gin it ter her, oh, Lordy, oh, Lordy!—'scuse me, Bishop,—she wuz cole an' dead! Doctor cyouldn't do nuthin', w'en I brung 'im. Rheumatchism o' th' heart, he says. It wuz turrible suddint, onyhow. 'Minded me o' them thar games with the thimble, you know, Bishop,—now ye see it, an' now ye don'; yes, 's quick 's thet!"

The Bishop opened his eyes at the comparison; but Demming had turned away, with a quivering

lip, to bury his face in his hands, and the Bishop was reproached for his criticism of the other's *naif* phraseology. Now, to be frank, he had approached Demming prepared to show severity, rather than sympathy, because of the cracker's last flagrant wrong-doing; but his indignation, righteous though it was, took flight before grief. Forgetting judgment in mercy, he proffered all the consolations he could summon, spiritual and material, and ended by asking Demming if he had made any preparations for the funeral.

"Thet thar's w'at I'm yere for," replied the man, mournfully. "You know jes' how I'm fixed. Cyoffins cost a heap; an' then thar's the shroud, an' I ain't got no reg'lar fun'al cloze, an' 'pears 's ef 't 'ud be a conserlation t' have a kerridge or two. She wuz a bawn lady, Bishop; we're kin ter some o' the real aristookracy o' Carolina,—we are, fur a fac'; an' I'd kin' o' like ter hev her ride ter her own fun'al, onyhow."

"Then you will need money?"

"Not frum you, Bishop, not a red cent; but if you uns over thar," jerking his thumb in the direction of the white pine towers,—"if you all 'd kin' o' gin me a small sum, an' ef you'd jes' start a paper, as 't were, an' al-so ef you yo'self 'ud hev the gre't kin'ness ter come out an' conduc' the fun'al obskesies, it 'ud gratify the corpse powerful. Mistress Demming 'll be entered* then like a bawn

* It is supposed that Mr. Demming intended to say "interred."

lady. Yes, sir, thet thar, an' no mo', 's w'at I'm emboldened ter ax frum you."

The Bishop reflected. "Demming," said he, gravely, "I will try to help you. You have no objection, I suppose, to our buying the coffin and other things needed. We will pay the bills."

Demming's dejected bearing grew a shade more sombre: he waved his hand, a gesture very common with him, and usually denoting affable approval; now it meant gloomy assent. "No objection 't all, Bishop," he said. "I knows my weakness, though I don' feel now as ef I'd evah want ter go on no carousements no mo'. I'm 'bliged ter you uns jes' the same. An' you won't forget 'bout the cloze? I've been a right good frien' to th' Norf in Aiken, an' I hope the Norf 'll stan' by me in the hour o' trubbel. Now, Bishop, I'll be gwine 'long. You'll fin' me at the cyoffin sto'. Mose Barnwell—he's a mighty decent cullud man—lives nigh me; he's gwine fur ter len' me his cyart ter tek the cyoffin home. Mahnin', Bishop, an' min', I don' want money outen *you*. No, sir, I do *not!*"

Then, having waved his hand at his hat, the cracker slouched away. The Bishop had a busy morning. He went from friend to friend, until the needed sum was collected. Nor did money satisfy him: he gathered together a suit of clothes from the tallest Northerners of benevolent impulses. Talboys was too short to be a donor of clothes, but he gave more money than all the others united,—a munificence that rebuked the

Bishop, for he had sought the young Boston man last of all and reluctantly; somehow, he could not feel acquainted with him, notwithstanding many meetings in many places. Moreover, he held him in slight esteem, as an idle fellow who did little good with a great fortune. In his gratitude he became expansive: told Talboys about his acquaintance with the cracker, described his experiences and perplexities, and at last invited the young man to go to the funeral, the next day. Talboys was delighted to accept the invitation; yet it could not be said that he was often delighted. But he admired the Bishop, and, even more warmly, he admired the Bishop's daughter; hence he caught at any opportunity to show his friendliness. Martin Talboys was never enthusiastic, and at times his views of life might be called cynical; but it would be a mistake to infer, therefore, that, as is common enough, he, having a mean opinion of other people, struck a balance with a very high one of himself. In truth, Martin was too modest for his own peace of mind. For years he had contrived to meet Louise, by accident, almost everywhere she went. She travelled a good deal, and her image was relieved against a variety of backgrounds. It seemed to him fairer in each new picture. His love for the Bishop's daughter grew more and more absorbing; but at the same time he became less and less sanguine that she would ever care for him. Although he was not enthusiastic, he was quite capable of feeling deeply; and

he had begun to suspect that he was capable of suffering. Yet he could not force himself to decide his fate by speaking. It was not that Louise disliked him ; on the contrary, she avowed a sincere liking ; she always hailed his coming with pleasure, telling him frankly that no one amused her as did he. There, alas ! was the hopeless part of it ; he used to say bitterly to himself that he wasn't a man, a lover, to her ; he was a mimic, a genteel clown, an errand boy, never out of temper with his work ; in short, she did not take him seriously at all. He knew the manner of man she did take seriously,—a man of action, who had done something in the world. Once she told Talboys that he was a "capital observer." She made the remark as a compliment, but it stung him to the quick ; he realized that she thought of him only as an observer. When a trifling but obstinate throat complaint brought the Bishop to Aiken, Talboys felt a great longing to win his approval. Surely, Louise, who judged all men by her father's standard, must be influenced by her father's favor. Unhappily, the Bishop had never, as the phrase goes, "taken" to Talboys, nor did he seem more inclined to take to him now, and Martin was too modest to persist in unwelcome attentions. But he greeted the present opportunity all the more warmly.

In the morning, the three—the Bishop, Louise, and Talboys—drove to the cracker's cabin. The day was perfect, one of those Aiken days, so fair

that even invalids find no complaint in their wearisome list to bring against them and can but sigh over each, "Ah, if all days might only be like this!" Hardly a cloud marred the tender blue of the sky. The air was divinely soft. They drove through the woods, and the ground was carpeted with dry pine spikes, whereon their horses' hoofs made a dull and pleasant sound. A multitude of violets grew in the little spaces among the trees. Yellow jasmine flecked the roadside shade with gold, its fragrance blending with the keen odors of the pine. If they looked up, they saw the pine tops etched upon the sky, and a solemn, ceaseless murmur beat its organ-like waves through all their talk. The Bishop had put on his clerical robes; he sat on the back seat of the carriage, a superb figure, with his noble head and imposing mien. As they rolled along, the Bishop talked. He spoke of death. He spoke not as a priest, but as a man, dwelling on the mystery of death, bringing up those speculations with which from the beginning men have striven to light the eternal darkness.

"I suppose it is the mystery," said the Bishop, "which causes the unreality of death, its perpetual surprise. Now, behind my certainty of this poor woman's death I have a lurking expectation of seeing her standing in the doorway, her old clay pipe in her mouth. I can't help it."

"Though she was a 'bawn lady,' she smoked, did she?" said Talboys. Then he felt the remark to be hopelessly below the level of the conversa-

tion, and made haste to add, "I suppose it was a consolation to her; she had a pretty hard life, I fancy."

"Awfully," said Louise. "She was nearly blind, poor woman, yet I think she did whatever work was done. I have often seen her hoeing. I believe that Demming was always good to her, though. He is a most amiable creature."

"Singular how a woman will bear any amount of laziness, actual worthlessness, indeed, in a man who is good to her," the Bishop remarked.

"Beautiful trait in her character," said Talboys. "Where should we be without it?"

"Have the Demmings never had any children?" asked Louise, who did not like the turn the talk was taking.

"Yes, one," the Bishop answered, "a little girl. She died three years ago. Demming was devotedly attached to her. He can't talk of her now without the tears coming to his eyes. He really," said the Bishop, meditatively, "seemed more affected when he told me about her death than he was yesterday. She died of some kind of low fever, and was ill a long time. He used to walk up and down the little path through the woods, holding her in his arms. She would wake up in the night and cry, and he would wrap her in an old army blanket, and pace in front of the house for hours. Often the teamsters driving into town at break of day, with their loads of wood, would come on him thus, walking and talking to the

child, with the little thin face on his shoulder, and the ragged blanket trailing on the ground. Ah, Demming is not altogether abandoned, he has an affectionate heart !"

Neither of his listeners made any response. Talboys, because of his slender faith in Demming ; Louise, because she was thinking that if the Aiken laundresses were intrusted with her father's lawn many more times there would be nothing left to darn. They went on silently, therefore, until the Bishop said, in a low voice, " Here we are !"

The negro driver, with the agility of a country coachman, had already sprung to the ground, and was holding the carriage door open.

Before them lay a small cleared tract of land, where a pleasant greenness of young potato vines hid the sand. In the centre was a tumble-down cabin, with a mud chimney on the outside. The one window had no sash, and its rude shutter hung precariously by a single leathern hinge. The door was open, revealing that the interior was papered with newspapers. Three or four yelping curs seemed to be all the furniture.

There was nothing extraordinary in the picture ; one could see fifty such cabins, in a radius of half a mile. Nor was there anything of mark in the appearance of Demming himself, dressed exactly as he was the day before, and rubbing his eyes in the doorway. But behind him ! The coachman's under jaw dropped beneath the weight of a loud " Fo' de Lawd !" The Bishop's benignant coun-

tenance was suddenly crimsoned. Talboys and Louise looked at each other, and bit their lips. It was only a woman,—a tall, thin, bent woman in a shabby print gown, with a faded sunbonnet pushed back from her gray head and a common clay pipe between her lips. Probably in her youth she had been a pretty woman, and the worn features and dim eyes still retained something engaging in their expression of timid good-will.

"Won' you all step in?" she said, advancing.

"Yes, yes," added Demming, inclining his body and waving both hands with magnificent courtesy; "alight, gen'lemen, alight! I'm sorry I ain't no staggah juice to offah ye, but yo' right welcome to sweet potatoes an' pussimmon beah, w'ich 's all—"

'Demming," said the Bishop, sternly, "what does this mean? I came to bury Mrs. Demming, and—and here she is!"

"Burry me!" exclaimed the woman. "Why, I ain't dead!"

Demming rubbed his hands, his face wearing an indescribable expression of mingled embarrassment, contrition, and bland insinuation. "Well, yes, Bishop, yere she is, an' no mistake! Nuthin' more 'n a swond, you unnerstan'. I 'lowed ter notify you uns this mahnin', but fac' is I wuz so decomposed, fin'in' her traipsin' 'bout in the gyardin an' you all 'xpectin' a fun'al, thet I jes' *hed* ter brace up; an' fac' is I braced up too much, an' ovahslep'. I'm powerful sorry, an' I don' blame you uns ef you *do* feel mad!"

The Bishop flung off his robes in haste and walked to the carriage, where he bundled them in with scant regard for their crispness.

"Never heard of such a thing!" said Louise, that being her invariable formula for occasions demanding expression before she was prepared to commit herself. By this time a glimmering notion of the state of things had reached the coachman's brain, and he was in an ecstasy. Talboys thought it fitting to speak. He turned to Mrs. Demming, who was looking from one to another of the group, in a scared way.

"Were you in a swoon?" he asked.

"Oh, laws!" cried the poor woman. "Oh, Demming, what *hev* you gwine an' done now? Gentlemen, he didn't mean no harm, I'm suah!"

"You were *not*, then?" said Talboys.

"Leave her 'lone, Cunnel," Demming said, quietly. "Don' yo' see she cyan't stan' no sech racket? 'Sence yo' so mighty peart 'bout it, no, she wahn't, an' thet thar's the truf. I jes' done it fur ter raise money. It wuz this a way. Thet thar mahin', w'ile I wuz a-considerin' an' a-contemplatin' right smart how I wuz evah to git a few dollars, I seen Mose Barnwell gwine 'long,—yo' know Mose Barnwell," turning in an affable, conversational way to the grinning negro,—"an' he'd a string o' crape 'roun' his hat 'cause he'd jes done los' his wife, an' he wuz purportin' ter git a cyoffin. So I 'lowed I'd git a cyoffin fur him cheap. An' I reckon," said Demming, smiling

graciously on his delighted black auditor, — "I reckon I done it."

"Demming," cried the Bishop, with some heat, "this exceeds patience—"

"I know, Bishop," answered the vagabond, meekly,—"I know it. I wuz tempted an' I fell, as you talked 'bout in yo' sermon. It's orful how I kin do sech things!"

"And those chickens, too!" ejaculated the Bishop, with rising wrath, as new causes rushed to his remembrance. "You stole chickens,—Judge Eldridge's chickens; you who pretend to be such a stanch friend of the North—"

"Chickens!" screamed the woman. "Oh, Lordy! Oh, he nevah done thet afo'e! He'll be took to jail! Oh, Demming, how cyould ye? Stealin' chickens, jes' like a low-down, no-'cyount niggah!" Sobs choked her voice, and tears of fright and shame were streaming down her hollow cheeks.

Demming looked disconcerted. "Now, look a yere!" said he, sinking his voice reproachfully; "w'at wuz the use o' bringin' thet thar up befo' th' ole 'ooman? She don' know nuthin' on it, you unnerstan', an' why mus' you rile 'er up fur? I'd not a thought it o' you, Bishop, thet I wyouldn't. Now, Alwynda," turning to the weeping woman, who was wiping her eyes with the cape of her sunbonnet, "jes' you dry up an' stop yo' bellerin', an' I 'splain it all in a holy minit. Thar, thar," patting her on the shoulder, "'tain't nuthin' ter cry 'bout; 'tain't no fault o' yourn,

onyhow. Fac' is, gen'lemen, 'twuz all 'long o' my 'preciation o' the Bishop. I'm a 'Piscopal, like yo'self, Bishop, an' I tole Samson Mobley thet you overlaid all the preachers yere fur goodness an' shortness bofe. An' he 'lowed, 'Mabbe he may fur goodness; I ain't no jedge,' says he; 'but fo' shortness, we've a feller down at the Baptis' kin beat 'im outen sight. They've jes' gin up sleepin' down thar,' says he, ''cause 'tain't worth w'ile.' So we tried it on, you unnerstan', 'cause thet riled me, an' I jes' bet on it, I did; an' we tried it on,—you in the mahnin' and him in the arternoon. An' laws, ef didn't so happen as how you'd a powerful flow o' speech! 'Twuz 'mazin' edifyin', but 't los' me the bet, you unnerstan'; an' onct los' I hed ter pay; an' not havin' ary chick o' my own I had ter confiscate some from th' gineral public, an' I tuk 'em 'thout distinction o' party frum the handiest cyoop in the Baptis' dernomination. I kin' o' hankered arter Baptis' chickuns, somehow, so's ter git even, like. Now, Bishop, I jes' leaves ter you uns, cyould I go back on a debt o' honah, like thet?"

"Honor!" repeated the Bishop, scornfully.

Talboys interposed again: "We appear to be sold, Bishop; don't you think we had better get out of this before the hearse comes?"

Demming waved his hand at Talboys, saying in his smoothest tones, "Ef you meet it, Cunnel, p'raps you'd kin'ly tell 'em ter go on ter Mose Barnwell's. He's ready an' waitin.'"

"Demming—" began the Bishop, but he did not finish the sentence; instead, he lifted his hat to Mrs. Demming, with his habitual stately courtesy, and moved in a slow and dignified manner to the carriage. Louise followed, only stopping to say to the still weeping woman, "He is in no danger from us; but this trick was a poor return for my father's kindness."

Demming had been rubbing his right eyebrow obliquely with his hand, thus making a shield behind which he winked at the coachman in a friendly and humorous manner; at Louise's words, his hand fell and his face changed quickly. "Don' say thet, miss," he said, a ring of real emotion in his voice. "I know I'm purty po' pickin's, but I ain't ongrateful. Yo' par will remember I wyouldn't tek no money frum *him!*"

"I would have given fifty dollars," cried the Bishop, "rather than have had this—this scandalous fraud! Drive on!"

They drove away. The last they saw of Demming he was blandly waving his hand.

The drive back from the house so unexpectedly disclosed as not a house of mourning was somewhat silent. The Bishop was the first to speak. "I shall insist upon returning every cent of that money," he said.

"I assure you none of us will take it," Talboys answered; "and really, you know, the sell was quite worth the money."

"And you did see her, after all," said Louise,

dryly, "standing in the doorway, with her old clay pipe in her mouth."

The Bishop smiled, but he sighed, too. "Well, well, I ought not to have lost my temper. But I am disappointed in Demming. I thought I had won his affection, and I hoped through his affection to reach his conscience. I suppose I deceived myself."

"I fear he hasn't any conscience to reach," Louise observed.

"I agree with Miss Louise," said Talboys. "You see, Demming is a cracker."

"Ah! the cracker has his virtues," observed the Bishop; "not the cardinal New England virtues of thrift and cleanliness and energy; but he has his own. He is as hospitable as an Arab, brave, faithful, and honest, and full of generosity and kindness."

"All the same, he isn't half civilized," said Talboys, "and as ignorant morally as any being you can pick up. He doesn't steal or lie much, I grant you, but he smashes all the other commandments to flinders. He kills when he thinks he has been insulted, and he hasn't the feeblest scruples about changing his old wife for a new one whenever he feels like it, without any nonsense of divorce. The women are just as bad as the men. But Demming is not only a cracker; he is a cracker spoiled by the tourists. We have despoiled him of his simplicity. He hasn't learned any good of us,—that goes without saying,—but he has

learned no end of Yankee tricks. Do you suppose that if left to himself he would ever have been up to this morning's performance? Oh, we've polished his wicked wits for him! Even his dialect is no longer pure South Carolinian; it is corrupted by Northern slang. We have ruined his religious principles, too. The crackers haven't much of any morality, but they are very religious,—all Southerners are. But Demming is an unconscious Agnostic. 'I tell ye,' he says to the saloon theologians, 'thar ain't no tellin'. 'Ligion 's a heap like jumpin' arter a waggin in th' dark · yo' mo'n likely ter lan' on nuthin'!' And you have seen for yourselves that he has lost the cracker honesty."

"At least," said Louise, "he has the cracker hospitality left; he made us welcome to all he had."

"And did you notice," said the Bishop, who had quite smoothed his ruffled brow by this time,—"did you notice the consideration, tenderness almost, that he showed to his wife? Demming has his redeeming qualities, believe me, Mr. Talboys."

"I see that you don't mean to give him up," said Talboys, smiling; but he did not pursue the subject.

For several days Demming kept away from Aiken. When he did appear he rather avoided the Bishop. He bore the jokes and satirical congratulations of his companions with his usual equa-

nimity ; but he utterly declined to gratify public curiosity either at the saloon or the grocery. One morning he met the Bishop. They walked a long way together, and its was observed that they seemed to be on most cordial terms. This happened on Tuesday. Friday morning Demming came to the Bishop in high spirits. He showed a letter from a cousin in Charleston, a very old man, with no near kindred and a comfortable property. This cousin, repenting of an old injustice to Demming's mother, had bethought him of Demming, his nearest relative ; and sent for him, inclosing money to pay all expenses. "He is right feeble," said Demming, with a cheerful accent not according with his mournful words, "an' wants ter see me onct fo' he departs. Reckon he means ter do well by me."

The Bishop's hopeful soul saw a chance for the cracker's reclamation. So he spoke solemnly to him, warning him against perilling his future by relapsing into his old courses in Charleston. Nothing could exceed Demming's bland humility. He filled every available pause in the exhortation with "Thet's so," and "Shoo 's yo' bawn !" and answered, "I'm gwine ter be 's keerful 's a ole coon thet 's jes' got shet o' the dogs. You nevah said truer words than them thar, an' don' you forget it ! I'm gwine ter buy mo' lan', an' raise hogs, an' keep th' ole 'ooman like a lady. Don' ye be 'feard o' me gwine on no' mo' tears. No, sir, none o' thet in mine. 'Twuz on'y 'cause I wuz so low in my

min' I evah done it, onyhow. Now, I'm gwine ter be 's sober 's a owl !"

Notwithstanding these and similar protestations, hardly an hour was gone before Demming was the glory of the saloon, haranguing the crowd on his favorite topic, the Bishop's virtues. "High-toned gen'leman, bes' man in the worl', an' nobody's fool, either. I'm proud to call him my frien', an' Aiken 's put in its bes' licks w'en it cured *him*. Gen'lemen, he 'vised me ter fight shy o' you all. I reckon as how I mought be better off ef I'd allus have follered his ammonitions. Walk up, gen'lemen, an' drink his health ! My 'xpens'."

The sequel to such toasts may readily be imagined. By six o'clock, penniless and tipsy, Demming was apologizing to the Bishop on the hotel piazza. He had the grace to seem ashamed of himself. "Wust o' 't is flingin' away all thet money ; but I felt kinder like makin' everybody feel good, an' I set 'em up. An' 't 'appened, somehow, they wuz a right smart chance o' people in, jes' thet thar minit,—they gen'rally *is* a right smart chance o' people in when a feller sets 'em up ! an' they wuz powerful dry,—they gen'rally *is* dry, *then ;* an' the long an' short o' 't is, they cleaned me out. An' now, Bishop, I jes' feel nashuated with myself. Suah 's yo' bawn, Bishop, I'm gwine ter reform. 'Stop short, an' nevah go on again,' like thet thar clock in the song. I am, fur a fac', sir. I'm repentin' to a s'prisin' extent."

"I certainly should be surprised if you *were* repentant," the Bishop said, dryly; then, after a pause, "Well, Demming, I will help you this once again. I will buy you a ticket to Charleston."

Some one had come up to the couple unperceived; this person spoke quickly: "Please let me do that, Bishop. Demming has afforded me enough entertainment for that."

"You don' think no gre't shakes o' me, do you, Cunnel?" said Demming, looking at Talboys half humorously, yet with a shade of something else in his expression. "You poke fun at me all the time. Well, pleases you, an' don' hurt me, I reckon. Mahnin', Bishop; mahnin', Cunnel. I'll be at th' deppo." He waved his hand and shambled away. Both men looked after him.

"I will see that he gets off," said Talboys. "I leave Aiken, myself, in the morning."

"Leave Aiken?" the Bishop repeated. "But you will return?"

"I don't expect to."

"Why, I am sorry to hear that, Mr. Talboys,—truly sorry." The Bishop took the young man's hand and pressed it. "I am just beginning to know you; I may say, to like you, if you will permit the expression. Won't you walk in with me now, and say good-by to my daughter?"

"Thanks, very much, but I have already made my adieux to Miss Louise."

"Ah, yes, certainly," said the Bishop, absently. He was an absorbed clergyman; but he had

sharp enough eyes, did he choose to use them ; and Talboys' reddening cheeks told him a great deal. It cannot be said that he was sorry because his daughter had not looked kindly on this worldly and cynical young man's affection ; but he was certainly sorry for the young man himself, and his parting grasp of the hand was warmer than it would have been but for that fleeting blush.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" soliloquized the Bishop, when, after a few cordial words, they had parted. "He looks as though it had hurt him. I suppose that is the way we all take it. Well, time cures us ; but it would scarcely do to tell him that, or how much harder it is to win a woman, find how precious she is, and then to lose her. Ah, well, time helps even that! 'For the strong years conquer us.'"

But he sighed as he went back to his daughter, and he did not see the beautiful Miss Reynolds when she bowed to him, although she was smiling her sweetest and brightest smile.

Louise sat in her room. Its windows opened upon the piazza, and she had witnessed the interview. She did not waver in her conviction that she had done right. She could not wisely marry a man whom she did not respect, let his charm of manner and temper be what it might. She needed a man who was manly, who could rule other men ; besides, how could she make up her mind to walk through life with a husband hardly above her shoulder? Still, she conceded to herself that, had

Talboys compelled one thrill of admiration from her by any mental or moral height, she would not have caviled at his short stature. But there was something ridiculous in the idea of Talboys thrilling anybody. For one thing, he took everything too lightly. Suddenly, with the sharpness of a new sensation, she remembered that he had not seemed to take the morning's episode lightly. Poor Martin !—for the first time, even in her reveries, she called him by his Christian name,—there was an uncomfortable deal of feeling in his few words. Yet he was considerate ; he made it as easy as possible for her.

Martin was always considerate ; he never jarred on her ; possibly, the master mind might jar, being so masterful. He was always kind, too ; continually scattering pleasures about in his quiet fashion. Such a quiet fashion it was that few people noticed how persistent was the kindness. Now a hundred instances rushed to her mind. All at once, recalling something, she blushed hotly. That morning, just as Talboys and she were turning from the place where he had asked and she had answered, she caught a glimpse of Demming's head through the leaves. He had turned, also, and he made a feint of passing them, as though he were but that instant walking by. The action had a touch of delicacy it it ; a Northerner of Demming's class would not have shown it. Louise felt grateful to the vagabond ; at the same time, it was hardly pleasant to know that he was as wise

as she in Talboys's heart affairs. As for Talboys himself, he had not so much as seen Demming; he had been too much occupied with his own bitter thoughts. Again Louise murmured, "Poor Martin!" What was the need, though, that her own heart should be like lead? Almost impatiently, she rose and sought her father.

The Bishop, after deliberation, had decided to accompany Demming to Charleston. He excused his interest in the man so elaborately and plausibly that his daughter was reminded of Talboys.

Saturday morning all three—the Bishop, the vagabond, and Talboys—started for Charleston. Talboys, however, did not know that the Bishop was going. He bought Demming's ticket, saw him safely to a seat, and went into the smoking-car. The Bishop was late, but the conductor, with true Southern good-nature, backed the train and took him aboard. He seated himself in front of Demming, and began to wipe his heated brow.

"Why do they want to have a fire in the stove this weather?" said he.

"Well," said the cracker, slyly, "you see we hain't all been runnin', an' we're kinder chilly!"

"Humph!" said the Bishop. After this there was silence. The train rolled along; through the pine woods, past small stations where rose trees brightened trim white cottages, then into the swamp lands, where the moisture painted the bark of tall trees, and lay in shiny green patches among them. The Southern moss dripping from the giant

branches shrouded them in a weird drapery, soft as mist. There was something dreary and painful to a Northern eye in the scene; the tall and shrouded trees, the stagnant pools of water gleaming among them, the vivid green patches of moss, the barren stretches of sand. The very beauty in it all seemed the unnatural glory of decay, repelling the beholder. Here and there were cabins. One could not look at them without wondering whether the inhabitants had the ague, or its South Carolina synonym, the "break-bone fever." At one, a bent old woman was washing. She lifted her head, and Demming waved his hat at her. Then he glanced at the Bishop, now busy with a paper, and chuckled over some recollection. He looked out again. There was a man running along the side of the road waving a red flag. He called out a few words, which the wind of the train tore to pieces. At the same instant, the whistle of the engine began a shrill outcry. "Sunthin' 's bust, I reckon," said Demming. And then, before he could see, or know, or understand, a tremendous crash drowned his senses, and in one awful moment blended shivering glass and surging roof and white faces like a horrible kaleidoscope.

The first thing he noticed, when he came to himself, was a thin ribbon of smoke. He watched it lazily, while it melted into the blue sky, and another ribbon took its place. But presently the pain in his leg aroused him. He perceived that the car was lying on one side, making the other

side into a roof, and one open window was opposite his eyes. At the other end the car was hardly more than a mass of broken seats and crushed sides, but it was almost intact where he lay. He saw that the stove had charred the woodwork near it; hence the smoke, which escaped through a crack and floated above him. The few people in the car were climbing out of the windows as best they might. A pair of grimy arms reached down to Demming, and he heard the brakeman's voice (he knew Jim Herndon, the brakeman, well) shouting profanely for the "next."

"Whar's the Bishop?" said Demming.

"Reckon he's out," answered Jim. "Mought as well come yo'self! H——! you've broke yo' leg!"

"Pull away, jes' the same. I don' wanter stay yere an' roast!"

The brakeman pulled him through the window. Demming shut his teeth hard; only the fear of death could have made him bear the agony every motion gave him.

The brakeman drew him to one side before he left him. Demming could see the wreck plainly. A freight train had been thrown from the track, and the passenger train had run into it while going at full speed. "The brakes wouldn't work," Demming heard Jim say. Now the sight was a sorry one: a heap of rubbish which had been a freight car; the passenger engine sprawling on one side, in the swamp, like a huge black beetle;

and, near it, the two foremost cars of its train overturned and shattered. The people of both trains were gathered about the wreck, helplessly talking, as is the manner of people in an accident. They were, most of them, on the other side of the track. No one had been killed ; but some were wounded, and were stretched in a ghastly row on car cushions. The few women and children in the train were collected about the wounded.

"Is the last man out?" shouted the conductor.

Jim answered, "Yes, all out—no, d—— it! I see a coat-tail down here."

"Look at the fire!" screamed a woman. "Oh, God help him! The car's afire!"

"He's gone up, whoever he is," muttered Jim. "They ain't an axe nor nuthin' on board, an' he 's wedged in fast. But come on, boys! I'll drop in onct mo'!"

"You go with him," another man said. "Here, you fellows, I can run fastest ; I'll go to the cabin for an axe. Some of you follow me for some water!"

Demming saw the speaker for an instant,—an erect little figure in a foppish gray suit, with a "cat's eye" gleaming from his blue cravat. One instant he stood on the piece of timber upon which he had jumped ; the next he had flung off his coat, and was speeding down the road like a hare.

"D—— ef 't ain't the Cunnel," said Demming.

"Come on!" shouted Talboys, never slackening his speed. "Hurry!"

The men went. Demming, weak with pain, was content to look across the gap between the trains and watch those left behind. The smoke was growing denser now, and tongues of flame shot out between the joints of wood. They said the man was at the other end. Happily, the wind blew the fire from him. Jim and two other men climbed in again. Demming could hear them swearing and shouting. He looked anxiously about, seeking a familiar figure which he could not find. He thought it the voice of his own fears, that cry from within the car. "Good God, it's the Bishop!" But immediately Jim thrust his head out of the window, and called, "The Bishop's in hyar! Under the cyar seats! He ain't hurt, but we cyant move the infernal things ter get him out!"

"Oh, Lordy!" groaned the vagabond; "an' I'm so broke up I cyant lif' a han' ter help him!"

In desperation, the men outside tried to batter down the car walls with a broken tree limb. Inside, they strained feverishly at the heavy timbers. Vain efforts all, at which the crackling flames, crawling always nearer, seemed to mock.

Demming could hear the talk, the pitying comments, the praise of the Bishop: "Such a good man!" "His poor daughter, the only child, and her mother dead!" "They were so fond of each other, poor thing, poor thing!" And a soft voice added, "Let us pray!"

"Prayin'," muttered Demming, "jes' like wim-

men ! Laws, they don' know no better. How'll I git ter him ?"

He began to crawl to the car, dragging his shattered leg behind him, reckless of the throbs of pain it sent through his nerves. "Ef I kin on'y stan' it till I git ter him !" he moaned. "Burnin' alive's harder nor this." He felt the hot smoke on his face ; he heard the snapping and roaring of the fire ; he saw the men about the car pull out Jim and his companions, and perceived that their faces were blackened.

"It 'll cotch me, suah 's death !" said Demming, between his teeth. "Well, 'tain't much mattah !" Mustering all his strength he pulled himself up to the car window below that from which Jim had just emerged. The crowd, occupied with the helpless rescuers, had not observed him before. They shouted at him as one man : "Get down, it's too late !" "You're crazy, you ——!" yelled Jim, with an oath.

"Never you min'," Demming answered, coolly. "I know what I'm 'bout, I reckon."

He had taken his revolver from his breast, and was searching through his pockets. He soon pulled out what he sought, merely a piece of stout twine ; and the crowd saw him, sitting astride the trucks, while he tied the string about the handle of the weapon. Then he leaned over the prison walls, and looked down upon the Bishop. Under the mass of wood and iron the Bishop lay, unhurt but securely imprisoned ; yet he had never advanced

to the chancel rails with a calmer face than that he lifted to his friend.

"Demming," he cried, "you here! Go back, I implore you! You can't save me."

"I know thet, Bishop," groaned the cracker. "I ain't tryin' ter. But I cyan't let you roast in this yere d—— barbecue! Look a yere!" He lowered the revolver through the window. "Thar's a pistil, an' w'en th' fire cotches onter you an' yo' gwine suah 's shootin', then put it ter yo' head an' pull the trigger, an' yo'll be outen it all!"

The Bishop's firm pale face grew paler as he answered, "Don't tempt me, Demming! Whatever God sends I must bear. I can't do it!" Demming paused. He looked steadily at the Bishop for a second; then he raised the revolver, with a little quiver of his mouth. "And go away, for God's sake, my poor friend! Bear my love to my dear, dear daughter; tell her that she has always been a blessing and a joy to me. And remember what I have said to you, yourself. It will be worth dying for if you will do that; it will, indeed. It is only a short pain, and then heaven! Now go, Demming. God bless and keep you. Go!"

But Demming did not move. "Don' you want ter say a prayer, Bishop?" he said in a coaxing tone,—"jes' a little mite o' one fur you an' me? Ye don' need ter min' 'bout sayin' 't loud. I'll unnerstan' th' intention, an' feel jes' so edified. I will, fur a fac'."

"Go, first, Demming. I am afraid for you!"

"I'm a-gwine, Bishop," said Demming, in the same soft, coaxing tone. "Don' min' *me*. I'm all right." He crouched down lower, so that the Bishop could not see him, and the group below saw him rest the muzzle of the pistol on the window-sill and take aim.

A gasp ran through the crowd,—that catching of the breath in which overtaxed feeling relieves itself. "He's doin' the las' kindness he can to him," said the brakeman to the conductor, "and by the Lord, he's giv' his own life to do it!"

The flames had pierced the roof, and streamed up to the sky. Through the sickening, dull roar they heard the Bishop's voice again:

"Demming, are you gone?"

The cracker struck a loose piece of wood, and sent it clattering down. "Yes, Bishop, that wuz me. I'm safe on th' groun'. Good-by, Bishop. I do feel 'bleeged ter you; an', Bishop, them chickens *wuz* the fust time. They wuz, on my honah. Now, Bishop, shet yo' eyes an' pray, fur it's a-comin!"

The Bishop prayed. They could not hear what he said, below. No one heard save the uncouth being who clung to the window, revolver in hand, steadily dying the creeping red death. But they knew that, out of sight, a man who had smiled on them, full of life and hope, but an hour ago was facing such torture as had tried the martyr's courage, and facing it with as high a faith.

With one accord men and women bent their heads. Jim, the brakeman, alone remained standing, his form erect, his eyes fixed on the two iron lines that made an angle away in the horizon. "Come on!" he yelled, leaping wildly into the air. "Fo' the Lord's sake, hurry! D—— him, but he's the bulliest runner!"

Then they all saw a man flying down the track, axe in hand. He ran up to the car side. He began to climp. A dozen hands caught him. "You're a dead man if you get in there!" was the cry. "Don't you see it's all afire?"

"Try it from the outside, Colonel!" said the conductor.

"Don't you see I haven't time?" cried Talboys. "He'll be dead before we can get to him. Stand back, my men, and, Jim, be ready to pull us both out!"

The steady tones and Talboys's business-like air had an instantaneous effect. The crowd were willing enough to be led; they fell back, and Talboys dropped through the window. To those outside the whole car seemed in a blaze, and over them the smoke hung like a pall; but through the crackling and roaring and the crash of falling timber came the clear ring of axe blows, and Talboys' voice shouting, "I say, my man, don't lose heart! We're bound to get you out!"

"Lordy, he don't know who 'tis," said Demming. "Nobody could see through that thar smoke!"

All at once the uninjured side of the car gave way beneath the flames, falling in with an immense crash. The flame leaped into the air.

"They're gone!" cried the conductor.

"No, they're not!" yelled Demming. "He's got him, safe an' soun'!" And as he spoke, scorched and covered with dust, bleeding from a cut on his cheek, but holding the Bishop in his arms, Talboys appeared at the window. Jim snatched the Bishop, the conductor helped out Talboys, and half a dozen hands laid hold of Demming. He heard the wild cheer that greeted them; he heard another cheer for the men with the water, just in sight; but he heard no more, for as they pulled him down a dozen fiery pincers seemed tearing at his leg, and he fainted away.

* * * * * *

The Bishop's daughter sat in her room, making a very pretty picture, with her white hands clasped on her knee and her soft eyes uplifted. She looked sad enough to please a pre-Raphaelite of sentiment. Yet her father, whom this morning she would have declared she loved better than any one in the world, had just been saved from a frightful death. She knew the story of his deliverance. At last she felt that most unexpected thrill of admiration for Talboys; but Talboys had vanished. He was gone, it was all ended, and she owned to herself that she was wretched. Her father was with Demming and the doctors. The poor vagabond must hobble through life on one leg, henceforward.

"If he lived," the doctor had said, making even his existence as a cripple problematic. Poor Demming, who had flung away his life to save her father from suffering,—a needless, useless sacrifice, as it proved, but touching Louise the more because of its very failure!

At this stage in her thoughts, she heard Sam, the waiter, knocking softly, outside. Her first question was about Demming. "The operation's ovah, miss, an' Mr. Demming he 's sinkin'," answered Sam, giving the sick man a title he had never accorded him before, "an' he axes if you'd be so kin' 's to step in an' speak to him; he's powerful anxious to see you."

Silently Louise rose and followed the mulatto. They had carried Demming to the hotel; it was the nearest place, and the Bishop wished it. His wife had been sent for, and was with him. Her timid, tear-stained face was the first object that met Louise's eye. She sat in a rocking-chair close to the bed, and, by sheer force of habit, was unconsciously rocking to and fro, while she brushed the tears from her eyes. Demming's white face and tangle of iron-gray hair lay on the pillow near her.

He smiled feebly, seeing Louise. She did not know anything better to do than to take his hand, the tears brightening her soft eyes. "Laws," said Demming, "don' do thet. I ain't wuth it. Look a yere, I got sun'thin' ter say ter you. An' you mustn't min', 'cause I mean well. You know 'bout—yes'day mahnin'. Mabbe you done what

you done not knowin' yo' own min',—laws, thet's jes' girls,—an' I wants you ter know jes' what kin' o' feller he is. You know he saved yo' pa, but you don' know, mabbe, thet he didn't know 'twas the Bishop till he'd jump down in thet thar flamin' pit o' hell, as 'twere, an' fished him out. He done it jes' 'cause he'd thet pluck in him, an' —don' you go fer ter chippin' in, Cunnel. I'm a dyin' man, an' don' you forget it! Thar he is, miss, hidin' like behin' the bed."

Louise during this speech had grown red to the roots of her hair. She looked up into Talboys's face. He had stepped forward. His usual composure had quite left him, so that he made a pitiful picture of embarrassment, not helped by crumpled linen and a borrowed coat a world too large for him. "It 's just a whim of his," he whispered, hurriedly; "he wanted me to stay. I didn't know —I didn't understand! For God's sake, don't suppose I meant to take such an advantage of the situation! I am going directly. I shall leave Aiken to-night."

It was only the strain on her nerves, but Louise felt the oddest desire to laugh. The elegant Martin cut such a very droll figure as a hero. Then her eye fell on Demming's eager face, and a sudden revulsion of feeling, a sudden keen realization of the tragedy that Martin had averted, brought the tears back to her eyes. Her beautiful head dropped. "Why do you go—now?" said she.

"Hev you uns made it up, yet?" mumured Demming's faint voice.

"Yes," Talboys answered, "I think we have, and—I thank you, Demming." The vagabond waved his hand with a feeble assumption of his familiar gesture. "Yo' a square man, Cunnel. I allus set a heap by you, though I didn't let on. An' she's a right peart young lady. I'm glad yo' gwine ter be so happy. Laws, I kind o' wish I wuz to see it, even on a wooden leg—" The woman at his side began to sob. "Thar, thar, Alwynda, don' take on so; cyan't be helped. You mus' 'scuse her, gen'lemen; she so petted on me she jes' cyan't hole in!"

"Demming," said the Bishop, "my poor friend, the time is short; is there anything you want me to do?" Demming's dull eyes sparkled with a glimmer of the old humor.

"Well, Bishop, ef you don' min', I'd like you ter conduc' the fun'al services. Reckon they'll be a genuwide co'pse this yere time, fo' suah. An', Bishop, you'll kind o' look arter Alwynda; see she gits her cyoffee an' terbacco all right. An' I wants ter 'sure you all again thet them thar chickens wuz the fust an' on'y thing I evah laid han's on t' want mine. Thet's the solemn truf; ain't it, Alwynda?"

The poor woman could only rock herself in the chair, and sob, "Yes, 'tis. An', he's been a good husband to me. I've allus hed the bes' uv everything! Oh, Lordy, 'pears 's though I cyan't bear it, nohow!"

Louise put her hand gently on the thin shoulder, saying, "I will see that she never wants anything we can give, Demming; and we will try to comfort her."

The cracker looked wistfully from her fresh, young face to the worn face below. "She wuz 's peart an' purty 's you, miss, w'en I fust struck up with 'er," said he, slowly. "Our little gal wuz her very image. Alwynda," in a singularly soft, almost diffident tone, "don' take on so; mabbe I'm gwine fer ter see 'er again. 'Twon't do no harm ter think so, onyhow," he added, with a glance at Talboys, as though sure there of comprehension.

Then the Bishop spoke, solemnly, though with sympathy, urging the dying man, whose worldly affairs were settled, to repent of his sins and prepare for eternity. "Shall I pray for you, Demming?" he said, in conclusion.

"Jes' as you please, Bishop," answered Demming, and he tried to wave his hand. "I ain't noways partickler. I reckon God a'mighty knows I 'd be th' same ole Demming ef I could get up, an' I don' mean ter make no purtenses. But mabbe it'll cheer up th' ole 'ooman a bit. So you begin, an' I'll bring in an Amen whenever it's wanted!"

So speaking, Demming closed his eyes wearily, and the Bishop knelt by the bedside. Talboys and Louise left them, thus. After a while, the wife stretched forth her toil-worn hand and took her

husband's. She thought she was aware of a weak pressure. But when the prayer ended there came no Amen. Demming was gone where prayer may only faintly follow ; nor could the Bishop ever decide how far his vagabond had joined in his petitions. Such doubts, however, did not prevent his cherishing an assured hope that the man who died for him was safe, forever. The Bishop's theology, like that of most of us, yielded, sometimes, to the demands of the occasion.

LOST.

By Edward Bellamy.

THE 25th of May, 1866, was no doubt to many a quite indifferent date, but to two persons it was the saddest day of their lives. Charles Randall that day left Bonn, Germany, to catch the steamer home to America, and Ida Werner was left with a mountain of grief on her gentle bosom, which must be melted away drop by drop, in tears, before she could breathe freely again.

A year before, Randall, hunting for apartments, his last term at the university just begun, had seen the announcement, "*Zimmer zu vermiethen*," in the hall below the flat where the Werners lived. Ida answered his ring, for her father was still at his government office, and her mother had gone out to the market to buy the supper. She would much rather her mother had been at home to show the gentleman the rooms; but knowing that they

*** *Scribner's Monthly, December*, 1877.

could not afford to lose a chance to rent them, she plucked up courage, and, candle in hand, showed him through the suite. When he came next day with his baggage he learned for the first time what manner of apartments he had engaged; for although he had protracted the investigation the previous evening to the furthest corner, and had been most exacting as to explanations, he had really rented the rooms entirely on account of a certain light in which a set of Madonna features, in auburn hair, had shown at the first opening of the door.

A year had passed since this, and a week ago a letter from home had stated that his father, indignant at his unexplained stay six months beyond the end of his course, had sent him one last remittance, barely sufficient for a steamer ticket, with the intimation that if he did not return on a set day he must thenceforth attend to his own exchequer. The 25th was the last day on which he could leave Bonn to catch the requisite steamer. Had it been in November, nature at least would have sympathized; it was cruel that their autumn time of separation should fall in the spring, when the sky is full of bounteous promise and the earth of blissful trust.

Love is so improvident that a parting a year away is no more feared than death, and a month's end seems dim and distant. But a week—a week only—that even to love is short, and the beginning of the end. The chilling mist that rose from the

gulf of separation so near before them, overshadowed all the brief remnant of their path. They were constantly together. But a silence had come upon them. Never had words seemed idler, they had so much to say. They could say nothing that did not mock the weight on their hearts, and seem trivial and impertinent because it was exclusive of more important matter. The utmost they could do was to lay their hearts open toward each other to receive every least impression of voice, and look, and manner, to be remembered afterward. At evening they went into the minster church, and sitting in the shadows listened to the sweet shrill choir of boys whose music distilled the honey of sorrow, and as the deep bass organ chords gripped their hearts with the tones that underlie all weal and woe, they looked in each other's eyes and did for a space feel so near that all the separation that could come after seemed but a trifling thing.

It was all arranged between them. He was to earn money, or get a position in business, and return in a year or two at most and bring her to America.

"Oh," she said once, "if I could but sleep till thou comest again to wake me, how blessed I should be; but, alas, I must wake all through the desolate time!"

Although for the most part she comforted him rather than he her, yet at times she gave way, and once suddenly turned to him and hid her face

on his breast, and said, trembling with tearless sobs :

"I know I shall never see thee more, Karl. Thou wilt forget me in thy great far land and wilt love another. My heart tells me so."

And then she raised her head and her streaming eyes blazed with anger.

"I will hover about thee, and if thou lovest another I will kill her as she sleeps by thy side."

And the woman must have loved him much, who, after seeing that look of hers, would have married him. But a moment after she was listening with abject ear to his promises.

The day came at last. He was to leave at three o'clock. After the noontide meal Ida's mother sat with them and they talked a little about America, Frau Werner exerting herself to give a cheerful tone to the conversation, and Randall answering her questions absently and without taking his eyes off Ida, who felt herself beginning to be seized with a nervous trembling. At last Frau Werner rose and silently left the room, looking back at them as she closed the door with eyes full of tears. Then as if by a common impulse they rose and put their arms about each other's necks, and their lips met in a long shuddering kiss. The breath came quicker and quicker ; sobs broke the kisses ; tears poured down and made them salt and bitter as parting kisses should be in which sweetness is mockery. Hitherto they had controlled their feelings, or rather she had controlled him ; but it was

no use any longer, for the time had come, and they abandoned themselves to the terrible voluptuousness of unrestrained grief, in which there is a strange meaningless suggestion of power, as though it might possibly be a force that could affect or remove its own cause if but wild and strong enough.

"Herr Randall, the carriage waits and you will lose the train," said Frau Werner from the door, in a husky voice.

"I will not go, by God!" he swore, as he felt her clasp convulsively strengthen at the summons. The lesser must yield to the greater, and no loss or gain on earth was worth the grief upon her face. His father might disinherit him; America might sink, but she must smile again. And she did—brave, true girl and lover. The devotion his resolute words proved was like a strong nervine to restore her self-control. She smiled as well as her trembling lips would let her, and said, as she loosed him from her arms:

"No, thou must go, Karl. But thou wilt return, *nicht wahr?*"

I would not venture to say how many times he rushed to the door, and glancing back at her as she stood there desolate, followed his glance once more to her side. Finally, Frau Werner led him as one dazed to the carriage, and the impatient driver drove off at full speed.

It is seven years later, and Randall is pacing the deck of an ocean steamer, outward bound from

New York. It is the evening of the first day out. Here and there passengers are leaning over the bulwarks pensively regarding the sinking sun as it sets for the first time between them and their native land, or may be taking in with awed faces the wonder of the deep, which has haunted their imaginations from childhood. Others are already busily striking up acquaintances with fellow-passengers, and a bridal pair over yonder sit thrilling with the sense of isolation from the world that so emphasizes their mutual dependence and all-importance to each other. And other groups are talking business and referring to money and markets in New York, London, and Frankfort as glibly as if they were on land, much to the secret shock of certain raw tourists, who marvel at the insensitiveness of men who, thus speeding between two worlds, and freshly in the presence of the most august and awful form of nature, can keep their minds so steadily fixed upon cash-books and ledgers.

But Randall, as, with the habit of an old voyager, he already falls to pacing the deck, is too much engrossed with his own thoughts to pay much heed to these things. Only, as he passes a group of Germans, and the familiar accents of the sweet, homely tongue fall on his ear, he pauses, and lingers near.

The darkness gathers, the breeze freshens, the waves come tumbling out of the east, and the motion of the ship increases as she rears upward to

meet them. The groups on deck are thinning out fast as the passengers go below to enjoy the fearsome novelty of the first night at sea, and to compose themselves to sleep as it were in the hollow of God's hand. But long into the night Randall's cigar still marks his pacing up and down as he ponders, with alternations of tender, hopeful glow and sad foreboding the chances of his quest. Will he find her?

It is necessary to go back a little. When Randall reached America on his return from Germany, he immediately began to sow his wild oats, and gave his whole mind to it. Answering Ida's letters got to be a bore, and he gradually ceased doing it. Then came a few sad reproaches from her, and their correspondence ceased. Meanwhile, having had his youthful fling, he settled down as a steady young man of business. One day he was surprised to observe that he had of late insensibly fallen into the habit of thinking a good deal in a pensive sort of way about Ida and those German days. The notion occurred to him that he would hunt up her picture, which he hadn't thought of in five years. With misty eyes and crowding memories he pored over it, and a wave of regretful, yearning tenderness filled his breast.

Late one night after long search he found among his papers a bundle of her old letters already growing yellow. Being exceedingly rusty in his German, he had to study them out word by word. That night, till the sky grew gray in the

east, he sat there turning the pages of the dictionary with wet eyes and glowing face, and selecting definitions by the test of the heart. He found that some of these letters he had never before taken the pains to read through. In the bitterness of his indignation he cursed the fool who had thrown away a love so loyal and priceless.

All this time he had been thinking of Ida as if dead, so far off in another world did those days seem. It was with extraordinary effect that the idea finally flashed upon him that she was probably alive and now in the prime of her beauty. After a period of feverish and impassioned excitement he wrote a letter full of wild regret and beseeching, and an ineffable tenderness. Then he waited. After a long time it came back from the German dead-letter office. There was no person of the name at the address. She had left Bonn, then. Hastily setting his affairs in order, he sailed for Germany on the next steamer.

The incidents of the voyage were a blank in his mind. On reaching Bonn he went straight from the station to the old house in —— strasse. As he turned into it from the scarcely less familiar streets leading thither, and noted each accustomed landmark, he seemed to have just returned to tea from an afternoon lecture at the university. In every feature of the street some memory lurked, and as he passed threw out delaying tendrils, clutching at his heart. Rudely he broke away, hastening on to that house near the end of the street, in each of

whose quaint windows fancy framed the longed-for face. She was not there, he knew, but for a while he stood on the other side of the street, unmindful of the stares and jostling of the passers-by, gazing at the house-front, and letting himself imagine from moment to moment that her figure might flit across some window, or issue from the door, basket in hand, for the evening marketing, on which journey he had so often accompanied her. At length, crossing the street, he inquired for the Werner family. The present tenants had never heard the name. Perhaps the tenants from whom they had received the house might be better informed. Where were they? They had moved to Cologne. He next went to the Bonn police-office, and from the records kept there, in which pretty much everything about every citizen is set down, ascertained that several years previous Herr Werner had died of apoplexy, and that no one of the name was now resident in the city. Next day he went to Cologne, hunted up the former tenants of the house, and found that they remembered quite distinctly the Werner family, and the death of the father, and only bread-winner. It had left the mother and daughter quite without resources, as Randall had known must probably have been the case. His informants had heard that they had gone to Düsseldorf.

His search had become a fever. After waiting seven years, a delay of ten minutes was unendurable. The trains seemed to creep. And yet, on

reaching Düsseldorf, he did not at once go about his search, but said to himself :

" Let me not risk the killing of my last hope till I have warmed myself with it one more night, for to-morrow there may be no more warmth in it."

He went to a hotel, ordered a room and a bottle of wine, and sat over it all night, indulging the belief that he would find her the next day. He denied his imagination nothing, but conjured up before his mind's eye the lovely vision of her fairest hour, complete even to the turn of the neck, the ribbon in the hair, and the light in the blue eyes. So he would turn into the street. Yes, here was the number. Then he rings the bell. She comes to the door. She regards him a moment indifferently. Then amazed recognition, love, happiness, transfigure her face. " Ida !" " Karl !" and he clasps her sobbing to his bosom, from which she shall never be sundered again.

The result of his search next day was the discovery that mother and daughter had been at Düsseldorf until about four years previous, where the mother had died of consumption, and the daughter had removed, leaving no address. The lodgings occupied by them were of a wretched character, showing that their circumstances must have been very much reduced.

There was now no further clew to guide his search. It was destined that the last he was to know of her should be that she was thrown on the tender mercies of the world—her last friend gone,

her last penny expended. She was buried out of his sight, not in the peaceful grave, with its tender associations, but buried alive in the living world; hopelessly hid in the huge, writhing confusion of humanity. He lingered in the folly of despair about those sordid lodgings in Düsseldorf as one might circle vainly about the spot in the ocean where some pearl of great price had fallen overboard.

After a while he roused again, and began putting advertisements for Ida in the principal newspapers of Germany, and making random visits to towns all about to consult directories and police records. A singular sort of misanthropy possessed him. He cursed the multitude of towns and villages that reduced the chances in his favor to so small a thing. He cursed the teeming throngs of men, women, and children, in whose mass she was lost, as a jewel in a mountain of rubbish. Had he possessed the power, he would in those days, without an instant's hesitation, have swept the bewildering, obstructing millions of Germany out of existence, as the miner washes away the earth to bring to light the grain of gold in his pan. He must have scanned a million women's faces in that weary search, and the bitterness of that million-fold disappointment left its trace in a feeling of aversion for the feminine countenance and figure that he was long in overcoming.

Knowing that only by some desperate chance he could hope to meet her in his random wanderings,

it seemed to him that he was more likely to be successful by resigning as far as possible all volition, and leaving the guidance of the search to chance; as if fortune were best disposed toward those who most entirely abdicated intelligence and trusted themselves to her. He sacredly followed every impulse, never making up his mind an hour before at what station he should leave the cars, and turning to the right or left in his wanderings through the streets of cities, as much as possible without intellectual choice. Sometimes, waking suddenly in the middle of the night, he would rise, dress with eager haste, and sally out to wander through the dark streets, thinking he might be led of Providence to meet her. And once out, nothing but utter exhaustion could drive him back; for, how could he tell but in the moment after he had gone she might pass. He had recourse to every superstition of sortilege, clairvoyance, presentiment, and dreams. And all the time his desperation was singularly akin to hope. He dared revile no seeming failure, not knowing but just that was the neccessary link in the chain of accidents destined to bring him face to face with her. The darkest hour might usher in the sunburst. The possibility that this was at last the blessed chance lit up his eyes ten thousand times as they fell on some new face.

But at last he found himself back in Bonn, with the feverish infatuation of the gambler which had succeeded hope in his mind, succeeded in turn by utter despair! His sole occupation now was re-

visiting the spots which he had frequented with her in that happy year. As one who has lost a princely fortune sits down at length to enumerate the little items of property that happen to be attached to his person, disregarded before but now his all, so Randall counted up like a miser the little store of memories that were thenceforth to be his all. Wonderfully the smallest details of those days came back to him. The very seats they sat in at public places, the shops they entered together, their promenades and the pausing-places on them, revived in memory under a concentrated inward gaze like invisible paintings brought over heat.

One afternoon, after wandering about the city for some hours, he turned into a park to rest. As he approached his usual bench, sacred to him because Ida and he in the old days had often sat there, he was annoyed to see it already occupied by a pleasant-faced, matronly looking German woman, who was complacently listening to the chatter of a couple of small children. Randall threw himself upon the unoccupied end of the bench, rather hoping that his gloomy and preoccupied air might cause them to depart and leave him to his melancholy revery. And, indeed, it was not long before the children stopped their play and gathered timidly about their mother, and soon after the bench tilted slightly as she relieved it of her substantial charms, saying in a cheery, pleasant voice :

"Come, little ones, the father will be at home before us."

It was a secluded part of the garden, and the plentiful color left her cheeks as the odd gentleman at the other end of the bench turned with a great start at the sound of her voice, and transfixed her with a questioning look. But in a moment he said:

"Pardon me, madam, a thousand times. The sound of your voice so reminded me of a friend I have lost, that I looked up involuntarily."

The woman responded with good-natured assurances that he had not at all alarmed her. Meanwhile, Randall had an opportunity to notice that in spite of the thick-waisted and generally matronly figure, there were, now he came to look closely, several rather marked resemblances to Ida. The eyes were of the same blue tint, though about half as large, the cheeks being twice as full. In spite of the ugly style of dressing it, he saw also that the hair was like Ida's, and as for the nose, that feature which changes least, it might have been taken out of Ida's own face. As may be supposed, he was thoroughly disgusted to be reminded of that sweet girlish vision by this broadly moulded, comfortable-looking matron. His romantic mood was scattered for that evening at least, and he knew he shouldn't get the prosaic suggestions of the unfortunate resemblance out of his mind for a week at least. It would torment him as a humorous association spoils a sacred hymn.

He bowed with rather an ill grace, and was about to retire, when a certain peculiar turn of the neck as the lady acknowledged his salute, caught his eye and turned him to stone. Good God ! this woman was Ida !

He stood there in a condition of mental paralysis. The whole fabric of his thinking and feeling for months of intense emotional experience had instantly been annihilated, and he was left in the midst of a great void in his consciousness out of touching-reach of anything. There was no sharp pang, but just a bewildered numbness. A few filaments only of the romantic feeling for Ida that filled his mind a moment before still lingered, floating about it, unattached to anything, like vague neuralgic feelings in an amputated stump, as if to remind him of what had been there.

All this was as instantaneous as a galvanic shock the moment he had recognized—let us not say Ida, but this evidence that she was no more. It occurred to him that the woman, who stood staring, was in common politeness entitled to some explanation. He was in just that state of mind when the only serious interest having suddenly dropped out of the life, the minor conventionalities loom up as peculiarly important and obligatory.

"You were Fraülein Ida Werner, and lived at No. —— —— strasse in 1866, *nicht wahr ?*"

He spoke in a cold, dead tone, as if making a necessary but distasteful explanation to a stranger.

"Yes, truly," replied the woman, curiously; "but my name is now Frau Stein," glancing at the children, who had been staring open-mouthed at the queer man.

"Do you remember Karl Randall? I am he."

The most formal of old acquaintances could hardly have recalled himself in a more indifferent manner.

"*Herr Gott im Himmel!*" exclaimed the woman with the liveliest surprise and interest. "Karl! Is it possible. Yes, now I recognize you. Surely! surely!"

She clapped one hand to her bosom, and dropped on the bench to recover herself. Fleshy people, overcome by agitation, are rather disagreeable objects. Randall stood looking at her with a singular expression of aversion on his listless face. But after panting a few times the woman recovered her vivacity and began to ply him vigorously with exclamations and questions, beaming the while with delighted interest. He answered her like a school-boy, too destitute of presence of mind to do otherwise than to yield passively to her impulse. But he made no inquiries whatever of her, and did not distantly allude to the reason of his presence in Germany. As he stood there looking at her, the real facts about that matter struck him as so absurd and incredible, that he couldn't believe them himself.

Pretty soon he observed that she was becoming a little conscious in her air, and giving a slightly

sentimental turn to the conversation. It was not for some time that he saw her drift, so utterly without connection in his mind were Ida and this comfortable matron before him, and when he did, a smile at the exquisite absurdity of the thing barely twitched the corners of his mouth, and ended in a sad, puzzled stare that rather put the other out of countenance.

But the children had now for some time been whimpering for supper and home, and at length Frau Stein rose, and, with an urgent request that Randall should call on her and see her husband, bade him a cordial adieu. He stood there watching her out of sight with an unconscious smile of the most refined and subtle cynicism. Then he sat down and stared vacantly at the close-cropped grass on the opposite side of the path. By what handle should he lay hold of his thoughts?

That woman could not retroact and touch the memory of Ida. That dear vision remained intact. He drew forth his locket and opening it gazed passionately at the fair girlish face, now so hopelessly passed away. By that blessed picture he could hold her and defy the woman. Remembering that fat, jolly, comfortable matron, he should not at least ever again have to reproach himself with his cruel treatment of Ida. And yet why not? What had the woman to do with her? She had suffered as much as if the woman had not forgotten it all. His reckoning was with Ida — was with her. Where should he find her? In what limbo could

he imagine her? Ah, that was the wildering cruelty of it. She was not this woman, nor was she dead in any conceivable natural way so that her girlish spirit might have remained eternally fixed. She was nothing. She was nowhere. She only existed in this locket and her only soul was in his heart, far more surely than in this woman who had forgotten her.

Death was a hopeful, cheerful state compared to that nameless nothingness that was her portion. For had she been dead he could still have loved her soul; but now she had none. The soul that once she had, and if she had then died, might have kept, had been forfeited by living on and had passed to this woman, and would from her pass on further till finally fixed and vested in the decrepitude of age by death. So then it was death and not life that secured the soul, and his sweet Ida had none because she had not died in time. Ah! had not he heard somewhere that the soul is immortal and never dies? Where then was Ida's? She had disappeared utterly out of the universe. She had been transformed, destroyed, swallowed up in this woman, a living sepulchre, more cruel than the grave, for it devoured the soul as well as the body. Pah! this prating about immortality was absurd, convicted of meaninglessness before a tragedy like this; for what was an immortality worth that was given to her last decrepit phase of life, after all its beauty and strength and loveliness had passed soulless away? To be aught but a

mockery immortality must be as manifold as the manifold phases of life. Since life devours so many souls, why suppose death will spare the last one?

But he would contend with destiny. Painters should multiply the face in his locket. He would immortalize her in a poem. He would constantly keep the lamp trimmed and burning before her shrine in his heart. She should live in spite of the woman.

But he could now never make amends to her for the suffering his cruel, neglectful youth had caused her. He had scarcely realized before how much the longing to make good that wrong had influenced his quest of her. Tears of remorse for an unatonable crime gathered in his eyes. He might indeed enrich this woman, or educate her children, or pension her husband; but that would be no atonement to Ida.

And then as if to intensify that remorse by showing still more clearly the impossibility of atonement, it flashed on him that he who loved Ida was not the one to atone for an offence of which he would be incapable, which had been committed by one who despised her love. Justice was a meaningless word, and amends were never possible, nor can men ever make atonement; for, ere the debt is paid, the atonement made, one who is not the sufferer stands to receive it, while, on the other hand, the one who atones is not the offender, but one who comes after him, loathing his offence and

himself incapable of it. The dead must bury their dead. And thus pondering from personal to general thoughts, the turmoil of his feelings gradually calmed, and a restful melancholy, vague and tender, filled the aching void in his heart.

KIRBY'S COALS OF FIRE.

By Louise Stockton.

CONSIDERING it simply as an excursion, George Scott thought, leaning over the side of the canal-boat and looking at the shadow of the hills in the water, his plan for spending his summer vacation might be a success, but he was not so sure about his opportunities for studying human nature under the worst conditions. It was true that the conditions were bad enough, but so were the results, and George was not in search of logical sequences. He had been in the habit of saying that nothing interested him as much as the study of his fellows; and that he was in earnest was proved by the fact that even his college experiences had not yet disheartened him, although they had cost him not a few neckties and coats, and sometimes too many of his dollars. But George had higher aspirations, and was not disposed to be satisfied

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with the opportunities presented by crude collegians or even learned professors, and so meant to go out among men. When he was younger,—a year or two before,—he had dreamed of a mission among the Indians, fancying that he would reach original principles among them ; but the Modocs and Captain Jack had lowered his faith, while the Rev. Dr. Buck's story of how the younger savages had been taught to make beds and clean knives, until they preferred these civilized occupations to their old habit of scampering through the woods, had dispelled more of the glitter, and he had resolved to confine his labors to his white brethren. He did not mean to seek his opportunities among the rich, nor among the monotonously dreary poor of the city, but in a fresher field. Like most theological students, he was well read in current literature, and he had learned how often the noblest virtues are found among the roughest classes. It was true, they were sometimes so latent that like the jewel in a toad's head they had the added grace of unexpectedness, but that did not interfere with the fact of their existence. He had read of California gamblers who had rushed from tables where they had sat with bowie-knives between their teeth, to warn a coming train of broken rails, and, when picked up maimed and dying, had simply asked if the children were saved, and then, content, had turned aside and died. He knew the story of the Mississippi engineer who, going home with a long-sought fortune to claim his waiting bride, had

saved his boat from wreck by supplying the want of fuel by hat, coat, boots, wedding-clothes, gloves, favors, and finally his bag of greenbacks and Northern Pacific bonds, then returning to his duty, sans money, sans wife, but plus honor and a rewarding conscience. When men are capable of such heroism, George would say, arguing from these and similar stories, they are open to true reformation, all that is necessary being some exercise of an influence that shall make such impulses constant instead of spasmodic.

About noon he had not been quite so sanguine regarding his mission, and had almost resolved that when they reached Springfield he would return East and join some of his class who were going to the Kaatskills. The sun was then pouring down directly on the boat, the cabin was stifling, the horses crept sluggishly along, the men were rude and brutal, and around him was an atmosphere of frying fish and boiling cabbage. The cabbage was perhaps the crowning evil ; for while he found it possible to force his ear and eye to be deaf and blind to the disagreeable, he had no amount of will that could conquer the sense of smell. There seemed to be little, he thought, with some contempt for his expectations, to reward his quest or maintain his theory that every one had at least one story to tell. It was not necessarily one's own story, he had said, but lives the most barren in incident come into contact with those more vehement, and have the chance of looking

into tragedies, into moral victories and fierce conflicts, through other men's eyes. He had hinted something of this to Joe Lakin early in the morning, when the mist was rising off the hills, when the air was fresh and keen, and the sun was making the long lines of oil upon the river glitter like so many brilliant snakes. Joe was the laziest and roughest of the men on the boat, but he sometimes had such a genial and even superior manner, that George had felt sure that he would comprehend his meaning. Thus when noon came, hot, close, and heavy with prophecy of dinner, George had sickened of human nature and of psychological studies; but now the sun had set, and a golden glory lit the sky; the fields on one side of the river rolled away green in clover and wavy in corn, the hills heavily wooded rose high and picturesquely on the other side, and the little island in the bend of the river seemed the home of quiet and of peace. The horses plodded patiently through the water, going out on the shallows and avoiding the deeper currents near the shore, and the boys, forgetting to shout and swear, rode along softly whistling. Over by the hills stood a cottage, and in the terraced garden a group of girls with bright ribbons in their hair were playing quoits with horseshoes. A rowboat was carrying passengers over the river to meet the evening train, and under the sweetness of the twilight George's spirits arose lightly to their level, his old faith returned to him, and he looked up with a new sense of fellowship

to Joe, who was filling a pipe with his favorite "towhead."

"It's a pity you don't smoke," said Joe, carefully striking a match and holding his cap before it, "for it seems a gift thrown away; and this tobacco is uncommon good, though you might fancy it a notion too strong. I've noticed that most preachers smoke, although they don't take kindly to drinking. I suppose they think it wouldn't seem the proper thing, and perhaps it wouldn't; but there's Parson Robinson,—I should think that a good, solid drink would be a real comfort to him sometimes. He's got a hard pull of it with a half share of victuals and a double share of children, so the two ends hardly ever see each other, much less think of meeting."

George hesitated for reply. He thought Joe was unnecessarily rough at times, and alluded to the ministry much too frequently. He had fancied when he left home that his blue flannel and gray tweed, with rather a jovial manner, would divest him of all resemblance to a theological student, and enable him to meet his companions on the ground of a common humanity, especially as he had at present no missionary intentions excepting those that might flow indirectly from his personal influence. Still, while he wanted Joe to recognize his broad liberality, he owed it to himself not to be loose in his expression of opinion.

"Well, yes," he said, slowly, "I suppose it would help a man to forget his troubles for a time,

but the getting over the spree and coming back to the same old bothers, not a bit better for the forgetting, would hardly be much comfort, even if the thing were right."

"Maybe not," replied Joe; "I s'pose it wouldn't be comfortable if those were your feelin's, but I reckon you don't know much about it unless from hearsay. But I tell you one thing, whiskey's a friend to be trusted"—adding, slowly, with a glance at George's face—"to get you into trouble if you let it get the upper hand of you. It's like a woman in that! It begins with the same letter too, and that's another likeness!"

George made no answer to this joke, over which Joe chuckled enough for both, and then returned to the charge:

"I've seen a good deal of life, one way and another," Joe said, "but I don't know much of parsons. Somehow they haven't been in my line; but if I had to choose between being a parson or a doctor, I'd take the doctor by long odds. You see the world's pretty much of a hospital as far as he's concerned, and when he can't tinker a man up, he lets him slide off and nobody minds; but the parson's different. When a man takes sick he looks kind of friendly on the doctor, because, you see, he expects him to cure him; but when the parson comes, he tells him what a miserable sinner he is and what he's coming to at last. Now, it ain't in nature to like that, and I don't blame the fellows who say they can stand a parson when they are

well, but that he's worse than a break-bone fever and no water handy when they're sick. And I shouldn't think any man would like to go about making himself unpleasant to others! Leastways, I wouldn't. Kicking Kirby used to say that he'd rather be a woman than a parson, and the force of language couldn't go further than that! He knew what he was talking about, for some of his folks were preachers; and there was good in Kirby, too! People may say what they please, but I'll allers hold to *that!*"

"Who was he?" asked George, happy to change the subject, being a little uneasy in his hold upon it, and hopeful of a story at last.

Joe looked over the hills.

"Well, he was a friend of mine when I was prospecting for oil, once. I allers liked Kicking Kirby."

George sat patiently waiting, while Jim refilled his pipe and then began:

"There ain't so much to tell, but men do curious things sometimes, and Kirby, I guess, was a man few folks would have expected very much of. There was hard things said of him, but he could allers strike a blow for a friend, or hold his own with the next man, let him be who he might. You see, there were a good many of us in camp, and we had fair enough luck; for the men over at Digger's Run had struck a good vein, so money was plenty and changed hands fast enough. We'd all hung together in our camp until Clint Bowers got into

trouble. None of the rest of us wanted to get mixed up in the fuss, but somehow we did, and the other camp fought shy of us and played mostly among themselves; and I've allers held that it is poor fun to take out of one pocket to put into the other. Our boys had different opinions about it, and some of them held that it wasn't Clint's awkward work that they'd got mad at, but that they meant to shut down on Kirby. You see, Kirby was a very lucky player, and although pretty rough things were said about it, nobody ever got a clear handle against him, and he wasn't the kind of fellow that was pleasant to affront. Kirby used to say it was all along of Clint; that he ought to have been kept from the cards, or sent down the river; that we'd have had a good run of luck all winter if it hadn't been for him. I don't know the rights properly, but I allers thought it was about six of one and a half dozen of the other. Anyhow, there was bad blood about it, and *that* don't run up hill, you know, and so there was trouble soon enough. The boys got into words one night, and Kirby threw a mug at Clint, who out with his knife and was at Kirby like a flash. Lucky for him Clint's eyes weren't in good seeing order, and the liquor hadn't made his arm any the more steady, so Kirby only got a scratch on his arm. It showed what Clint would like to do, though, and some of the boys made pretty heavy bets on the end of it. I stuck up for Kirby, for you see I knew him pretty well, and there was true grit in him; and then,

too, he was oncommon pleasant about it, and even stopped saying much about Clint's blocking up our luck over at the Run.

"Well, just about then Jack White came over from Cambria and told Clint that he'd heard that his uncle was asking around where he was. You see, Clint's uncle had a store down there, and had made a tidy pile of money, and as he hadn't any children, he said he wouldn't mind leaving it to him if he was living respectable. Clint had lived with him when he was a boy, but they hadn't got along very well, so Clint ran off. The old man didn't mind this, though, and now he wanted to find him. Jack said he was sure that if Clint was to go over and play his cards right he'd get the money. You may be sure this was a stroke of luck for Clint just then, and he didn't like to lose it ; but you see he didn't look very genteel, and he knew his uncle was sharp enough to find it out. He was fat enough, for whiskey never made a living skeleton of him, but it was plain that it wasn't good health that had made his nose so red, nor fine manners that had given him the cut across his cheek and bruised up his eye. The boys all allowed that he was the hardest-looking chap in the camp, and if his uncle left him his money, it wouldn't be on the strength of his good countenance ! But you know he had to do something right off, and so he wrote as pretty a letter to the old man as ever I want to see ; but when the answer came it said his uncle was very sick, and as he had something particular

to say to him, wouldn't Clint come over at once, and inclosed he'd find the money for his fare. I tell you this stumped Clint, for he'd had another fight, and was a picture to behold.

"But here's where the surprise to us all came in. Clint was pretty well puzzled what to do, and while all the boys were advising him, Kirby spoke up. I'd noticed he was pretty quiet, but nobody could have guessed what he was thinking about. He looked some like Clint, and once had been pitched into by a new Digger Run boy for Clint. The fellow never made the second mistake about them. It wasn't as though they were twins, but they both had brown hair and long beards, blue eyes, and were about the same build, so you couldn't have made a descriptive list of the one that wouldn't have done for the other. What Kirby said was that Clint's uncle hadn't seen him since he was boy, and he'd expect to find him changed; and although he—that's Kirby, you know—had had hard feelin's to Clint, he wasn't a man to hold a grudge, and he'd let bygones be bygones. So if Clint thought well of it, he'd go over to Cambria, and if he found the land lay right he'd pass off for him, and make things sure.

"This struck us all of a heap, for we knew Kirby could do it if he choose and if nobody interfered with him, and that he really could cajole the old man better than Clint could; for when that fellow got wound up to talk he was allers going you five better. Some of the boys thought it rather risky,

and they wanted Clint to write and say he had the typhoid fever, and so stave it off until he looked fit to go ; but he knew that if he crossed his uncle now he'd likely enough lose everything, and so he thought it best to make sure and let Kirby go and see, anyhow. One thing that helped Kirby along was that his first wife had come from Cambria, and he'd heard her talk so much about the people that he knew nearly as much of them as Clint did. To make the matter sure, Clint stuffed him with all he remembered, and one night we got up a-practising ; and we made out that we were the folks, and Kirby pow-wowed to the minister, and old Miss Cranby—that was me !—and the doctor, until he knew his lesson and we'd nearly split our sides laughing.

"Of course, seeing the interest we all took in it, we weren't going to do the thing half, so we clubbed together and got Kirby a suit of store-clothes and a shiny valise, and he went off as proper as a parson,—begging your pardon !—and we settled down again. He wrote pretty prompt, and said everything was going on as smooth as oil. The old man had called out that it was Clint as soon as he saw him, before he'd said a word, and Kirby wrote it would have been kind of cruel to have told him better. So he didn't. He wrote several more letters, and once Jack White had a letter from his sister saying that Clint Bowers had come home, and it was said that the old man was tickled to death with his manners, and meant to

leave him all he had. This clinched it sure enough, and Clint became tip-top among the boys, and his credit was good for all the drinks he chose to order, and I must say he was liberal enough, and nobody contradicted him. He wrote to Kirby,—he was all the time writing to him,—but this time he told how handsome he thought it was in him to do all this, considering everything. When the answer came, Kirby said he didn't profess much religion, and he thought that generally speakin' heaping coals of fire on any one's head was against the grain, but Clint was more than welcome to his services."

"He *was* a good fellow," exclaimed George. "I don't wonder you liked him!"

"Yes, *I* allers stood up for Kirby when the boys were hardest on him. But to finish up, for I'm telling an oncommon long yarn, at last a letter came saying that the old man was dead and the money fixed. How much it was Kirby couldn't say yet, but he meant to hurry matters up, he said. Of course he didn't put all he meant into plain words, for it wouldn't do to trust it, and he was allers more careful than Clint, who never knew when to hush. But now Kirby said he'd have everything straight inside of two weeks, and we weren't to look for another letter from him.

"Well, it *was* surprisin' how many birds Clint broiled for Kirby the next few weeks! You see, Kirby allers was a gentleman in his tastes, and had a particular liking for birds on toast, and of course

Clint wanted to give him a proper welcome home. We knew just when the boats were likely to come, and Clint was allers ready for a surprise."

"And he came just when he was least expected," said George, with a bright smile; "that is the way things always happen in this world. I am sure of that!"

"Why, no, bless your heart, *he* never came back! I allers knew he wouldn't! He bought a share in a circus with the money, and went down South. They said he married the girl who did the flying trapeze, but I'm not sure about that. Anyway, it appears he's done a good business, and I'm sure he's kept Clint's letters to him. There was true grit in Kirby, I've allers stuck to *that!* Does the pipe seem too strong for you? The wind does blow it your way, that's a fact."

PASSAGES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A SOCIAL WRECK.

By Margaret Floyd.

JANUARY 13th, 188–.—Twenty-nine to-day, with two painful facts staring me blankly in the face. I am reduced almost literally to my last cent, and have no prospect of increasing this sum. For the first time in my life I may as well examine the situation impartially. It is not my fault that it is a physical impossibility for me to get up early in the morning, and therefore that I never have stayed in any office more than two or three weeks at the longest. It is constitutional. I can't write a good hand, or keep books correctly, for the same reason. Mathematics were left out of my composition. I *must* smoke, and it is impossible for me to smoke a poor cigar. If I am in debt for cigars, as well as other necessities, how can I help

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it? I would willingly work if I could only find the kind of work that would suit me. I am not a fool. There is not a man in New York who speaks French with a better accent than I do. I can sing better than most amateurs. There is no vanity in saying that people consider me good-looking. I don't find it difficult to please when I make an effort, and yet I am a complete failure. It is *not* my fault. I'm a round peg in a square hole. I ought to have been the oldest son of a duke, with a large allowance. Instead, I am a helpless orphan, with nothing a year. I seem to joke; in reality I am in despair. Fortunately, my landlady trusts me blindly, or I would be turned into the street.

I have sold or pawned all my valuables. I might pawn my dress suit and studs, but if I did, I couldn't go out to dinner if I were asked, and that is always a saving. I cannot get a place in an opera company, because my voice has not been sufficiently trained. There always *is* something to prevent my success, no matter what I try.

To-day I met Morton in the street. He stopped me and said: "By the way, Valentine, your name will come up at the Amsterdam very soon. You are sure to get in."

Imagine paying club dues in my present condition! Yet to belong to the Amsterdam has been one of my ambitions. I had to get out of it, and said, in an offhand way: "Ah, thanks, Morton,

but you may as well take my name off the list. I'm thinking of living out of town."

So I am—I think of occupying six feet of real estate in the country, if something doesn't happen soon. Morton always irritates me. He is one of those prosperous, fortunate creatures, always so completely *the thing*, that I feel hopelessly my own deficiencies.

January 15th.—Something *has* happened. I have an idea. It strikes me as strange, yet feasible. When I came in this afternoon I found a letter lying on my table. I opened it; it ran as follows:

"NEW YORK, January 14, 188–.

"Families who are about to give receptions, dinner parties, or other entertainments will be gratified to know that persons who will assist in making these events pleasant and enjoyable can be obtained through the medium of the Globe Employment Bureau. These persons will not be professionals, but parties of culture and refinement, who will appear well, dress elegantly, and mingle with the guests, while able and willing to play, sing, converse fluently, tell a good story, give a recitation, or anything that will help to make an evening pass pleasantly.

"The Globe Employment Bureau in this plan simply complies with the increasing demands of a large class of its patrons. The attendance of these persons, young or old, can be had for the sum of fifteen dollars per evening each. We will guaran-

tee them to be strictly honorable and reliable persons. Respectfully yours,

"THE GLOBE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU."

The idea amused me. I moralized on it as a phase of New York society; wondered what sort of people would employ these individuals; wondered what the individuals would feel like themselves; smiled grimly at the inference that I could go to the expense of fifteen dollars to procure the services of one of the persons. While I stood with the letter in my hand, a thought flashed into my mind. It widened and developed, until now it possesses my whole being. I can't hire a Globe young man, but anything is better than starvation: I will *be* a Globe young man!

January 18th.—It is all settled, and I am in the service of the New York Globe. After two days of hesitation, I presented myself this morning at the Globe office. I was shown to the Employment Bureau, and there, through a little grating, I was interviewed by a young clerk of supernatural composure. He had a cool discerning eye that seemed to read my very soul, and take in my situation and errand at a glance. I produced the Globe letter as the simplest method of introducing myself.

He looked at me with his discriminating expression. "Let me see," he murmured. "We have had three thousand applications since the day before yesterday, and our list is complete. But six feet — blonde — good-looking — distinguished, in

fact''—he bit the handle of his pen meditatively. His air of reflection changed to one of decision. "Just follow me, please," he concluded.

I followed him through a dim passage to a little room where there was a piano with some music on it. Standing beside the piano was a small dark man, rubbing his hands and bowing politely as we entered. It reminded me of one of the torture chambers of the Inquisition. What were they going to do to me?

The chief inquisitor, in the shape of the clerk, began the ceremonies by saying: "I suppose you would not have come here without being able to fill the requirements of the Globe circular. Be kind enough to sit down and sing and play that song."

It proved to be "In the Gloaming." I was in good voice, and managed to sing it with some expression.

"Bravo!" said the second inquisitor, in the shape of the little dark man.

He then took me in hand. He proved to be an Italian, and asked me questions in Italian and French, in both of which languages I answered as well as I could. I was then obliged to sing pathetic songs, drinking songs, comic songs, opéra bouffe, English ballads, and then—worse than all—requested to recite some dramatic poetry. Here I was at sea. I confessed that I knew none.

"Never mind," said the clerk, encouragingly; "you have done remarkably well in other respects, and you can easily learn the regulation pieces."

He handed me a list, beginning with "Curfew shall not ring To-night" and "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and ending with "Betsy and I are Out" and "The May Queen." I choked down my rising resentment. What wouldn't I do for fifteen dollars an evening, short of crime?

"Very well," I said, obediently.

I was led out of the torture chamber, exhausted, but still living. It is queer. I feel shaky. I had to give them my own name. I found that there was no getting out of this. They said that the whole matter was strictly in confidence. They required references, and I had taken the precaution to bring several letters of recommendation from well-known business men—letters that had been given to me a short while before when I was trying to get a situation in a business house down town. These were satisfactory as to my character.

I have put the halter around my own neck now.

N.B.—Suppose Morton were to find this out!

January 20th.—I have had my first experience in my new character. I had been told to be ready every afternoon by five o'clock for orders. Yesterday, about six in the afternoon, I received a message from the Globe, directing me to go to a house in East Seventy-fourth Street, near Fifth Avenue, at nine o'clock that evening, and submit myself to the orders of Mr. Q. K. Slater. It was a consoling thought that I had never heard of Mr. Q. K. Slater, and that East Seventy-fourth Street was an unknown region to me.

Punctually at nine that evening I found myself in the large parlor of a house in Seventy-fourth Street, brightly lighted, and filled with people. The centre of the room was cleared, and several people were dancing to the strains of a band. Near the door stood a tall imposing gentleman with gray whiskers, and a lady in full evening dress. Doubtless my hosts, or rather my proprietors.

What was I to do? How were they to know who and what I was? As I stood hesitating, I found that their eyes were fixed upon me with a significant glance. I immediately went toward them. To my astonishment the lady greeted me by my name with the utmost suavity.

"Good-evening, Mr. Valentine," she said. "I am delighted to see you."

Mr. Slater murmured something that sounded like "How do you do?"

I said that I was delighted to meet—see them. Mrs. Slater turned to another lady standing near her.

"Mrs. Raggles, *do* let me introduce Mr. Valentine. We were so afraid that he would not be able to come."

While I talked as well as I could to Mrs. Raggles, I surreptitiously observed my host and hostess. Mr. Slater looked uncomfortable. There was a consciousness in his uneasy manner that if I was a sham, so was he. I feared that he might give us both away before the evening was

over. Mrs. Slater, on the contrary, soared above any feeling of this sort. Her party was to be a success; that was evidently her principal object. What a comfort this was to me! I felt safe in her hands. Of course it was as much of an object to her as to me to conceal the fact that I was not a *bona fide* invited guest. I took my cue at once. Avoid Mr. Slater; arrange matters in such a way that Mrs. Slater could engineer me through the evening. All the time I had a sensation that in avoiding Mr. Slater I was avoiding an old and tried friend. There was something strangely familiar in his face; in the almost courtly wave of his hand as he directed his guests to the refreshment-room; in his protecting manner as he walked about, first with one lady, then with another. I cannot recall distinctly the events of the evening. I have a confused impression of lights, flowers, music, and people, much like any other party, yet with certain differences. The dressing was not in particularly good taste, and the German was managed in a most extraordinary manner. At eleven o'clock the man who was to lead it came forward with a hat containing scraps of paper. I noticed that all the men went up and drew a slip of paper. They examined it, and retired into the crowd. I couldn't imagine what this ceremony meant, and felt sure that when my turn came I should make some frightful blunder. As I thought this, I found Mrs. Slater beside me. She hurriedly explained to me that this party was one of a series of Germans

given at the houses of her friends, and that there had been some feeling on the part of certain young ladies because others had been oftener asked to dance the German and drive home afterward than they had. In order to obviate this a system of lots had been arranged, by which chance alone decided the matter. "Each young gentleman," concluded Mrs. Slater, "can bring any young lady that he wishes to the party; but he is expected to go home with the lady whom he draws for the German. I hope you understand what is expected of you. You dance, of course?" she added, with a slightly stern manner—the manner of a proprietor. I said that I could.

Accordingly I drew my lot, and found myself the partner of a pretty girl, who proved to be the daughter of Mrs. Raggles.

This is my journal; no one will ever see it; I can be honest. I impressed Miss Raggles. I think I impressed every one that I met. I realized that on the mere making a good impression depended my success in the future. To talk, to dance, to flirt, to eat ice-cream, at the rate of three or four dollars an hour—for the present this was my profession. Why not elevate it, glorify it, by doing these things better than any one else had ever done them? There was an exhilaration in the thought. It positively inspired me. I was in constant demand, and was presented to almost every one. Toward the end of the evening Mrs. Slater asked me to sing. I thought it odd for a large

party, but I sang my best. One thing damped my spirits. I had been standing in the doorway, when I suddenly became aware of two waiters who were whispering together at a short distance. In a lull of the music their words reached me.

"Which did yer say he was?" said one in a loud whisper.

"That's him—him there by the door, the good-lookin' fellow. Looks as if he didn't have nothin' in the world to do but stand there all the evening," answered the other.

"You don't say!" ejaculated the first; "and he gets fifteen dollars for doin' the likes of that? You and me has missed our vocation, Bill."

I could have knocked down the impertinent fellows, but, after all, what right had I to do it? It was all true. "Noblesse oblige," I muttered through my clinched teeth; and catching Mrs. Slater's stern glance, I went to do my duty by taking my partner to supper.

At the close of the evening Mr. Slater came up to me. He was certainly a dignified-looking old fellow, but he seemed unhappy. "Well, Mr. Valentine," he said, with rather a melancholy smile, "you have done remarkably well. Been quite the life of the evening. Trying thing to entertain a party of this size. This is the first time we have done it. How do you think it went off? Your candid opinion now."

"Remarkably well," I said.

I noticed that his manner to me was secret and

confidential, as if we had entered into some dark partnership of crime.

"Mrs. Slater," he continued, "is an ambitious woman, and it was her idea having you. She wanted a different style of young man from those we have been accustomed to, and"—looking at me with a sad pride—"she got it—she got it."

As I looked at him his face seemed to grow more familiar. At this moment Miss Raggles, who had gone upstairs to get her cloak, made her appearance. I bade a hurried good-night to Mr. and Mrs. Slater, and accompanied the young lady home. She lived in that part of Fifth Avenue which is on the confines of both New York and Harlem. She treated me as a distinguished stranger, and ended by inviting me to call. Unsuspecting Miss Raggles! Her mother had apparently gone home hours before. In the Slater set they managed things in this way.

I wonder when I am to be paid.

January 22d.—I have discovered where I have seen Mr. Slater before. I stopped at Stewart's yesterday to buy some gloves (I was paid the morning after the Slater party), and as I walked down the shop one of the individuals popularly known as "walkers" approached me.

"What do you desire, sir?" I heard a pompous voice say. "Where may I direct you?"

"Gloves," I said, mechanically.

"Third section on the right hand, Fourth Avenue side, sir."

I looked at my guide, as a familiar tone struck my ear. It was Mr. Slater. At the same instant he recognized me. A moment before we had been independent human beings—at the next our consciousness of the mutual knowledge we possessed of each other destroyed our comfort. Mr. Slater walked away in one direction and I in another. Still, it was a comfort to know where I had seen him before.

January 27th.—I find that a whole week has elapsed since I have written anything in my journal. The truth is, I have been too miserable. This occupation is degrading. Everywhere I go some fresh humiliation awaits me. The very servants look on me with suspicion. At one place the butler followed me around all the evening as if I were a thief. I don't think any one noticed it, yet I could not rid myself of the feeling that Morton, who happened to be there, looked at me suspiciously once or twice. Suppose he were to discover everything, and tell it at the club! It is too hideous to be thought of.

At another house, where I had been obliged to sing comic songs and make a buffoon of myself for two hours, my host—an enormously rich and illiterate person—presented me with a check for twenty-five dollars as I left the house. I returned it indignantly, but he pressed it into my hand, saying, heartily :

"I ain't goin' to take it back, so you may as well keep it. You done first-rate this evening—

first-rate! 'Tain't charity, but because what you done is worth more than fifteen dollars by a long shot; and when I have pleasure, I expect to pay for it, like I do for everything else."

To avoid a scene, I had to keep the money. I am certainly richer than I was. I have been able, by my honest exertions, to supply myself with the luxuries without which I cannot exist; and when my present income is doubled, I shall be able to pay something on account for my board bill here, and settle some of my other bills. The question that now troubles me is, Are they *honest* exertions?

Since the evening at Mr. Griddle's (the rich manufacturer who gave me the check) I have been to several places, at all of which, among others that I knew, I saw Morton. His manner is becoming most unpleasant. He said to me the other night, with that satirical grin of his:

"You're getting to be quite a society man, Valentine. Never used to see you about so much. It's always been my way, but it's something new for you."

I felt sure he suspected something. Another time he said:

"By the way, I thought you were going out of town to live? As you seem to have changed your mind, I suppose it is all right about the Amsterdam?"

I would not dare to join a club now. I stammered out something about talking it over another time, and left the room. I begin to hate him. He

suspects the truth, and knows that I am in his power, and enjoys it.

February 4th.—Added to the mortifications I am exposed to, the feeling that I am a sham grows on me. I impose on every one wherever I go. This thought has robbed me of my peace of mind. However poor I was before, I had nothing to be ashamed of. Now I am a man with a *Secret.*

February 5th.—I have realized this too late. Last night I was sent for to fill a place at a dinner-table where fourteen had been expected, and at the last minute one had failed. Mr. Courtland, the gentleman at whose house the dinner was given, treated me politely before his guests, yet with him I felt all the odium of my position. I was there as a convenience, and nothing else. My relation to him was purely a business one. The house was on Washington Square, and was old-fashioned but magnificent. The dining-room was hung with tapestry, and we sat around the dinner-table in carved arm-chairs. I made a pretence of talking to the old lady whom I took in to dinner, and whom I had met before, but in reality my attention was absorbed by a beautiful young girl who sat opposite to me. She had dark hair, brilliant coloring, and deep-set brown eyes. She wore an oddly old-fashioned gown of yellow satin, cut square in the neck. I found that she was Mr. Courtland's niece and heiress, and lived with him. He was a widower without any children. After dinner, when the men went into the drawing-room, I de-

termined to leave. Mr. Courtland's manner was too much for my self-respect. Miss Courtland stood by the piano, and every one was begging her to sing.

"My music has gone to be bound," she said, "and I cannot sing without it."

Her uncle would not accept this refusal, and produced a portfolio of old music. His niece selected a duet for soprano and tenor, and said that she would sing if any one would take the tenor; she stood with the music in her hand, looking dubiously at the circle of men around her. Not one could sing. Mrs. Delancey, my companion at the dinner-table, looked at me.

"Mr. Valentine sings, Helen. I am sure he will be happy to sing with you."

Miss Courtland turned to me with a smile that was positively bewildering. "Will you sing this duet with me, Mr. Valentine?"

Mr. Courtland flashed a furious glance at me, which said, "Don't dare to sing with my niece." Of all my humiliations this stung me the most. Mr. Courtland, however, seemed to regret having shown so much feeling, for his manner changed.

"I hope you will oblige us by singing, Mr. Valentine," he said, stiffly.

Of course I sang, although I was tempted to refuse, and leave the house instead. How could I refuse Miss Courtland? Her voice was exquisite —sympathetic. It made me feel as though I could confide in her. What if I should! Yes, and be

cut the next time we met. I felt painfully the chasm that divided us, gentle and cordial as she was, and left as soon as the song was over. I wonder whether I shall see her again?

February 13th.—I have been out several times this week, and twice have met Miss Courtland. Her uncle never goes out, and Mrs. Delancey chaperons her. She always seems glad to see me, and certainly has the most charming manners. Never mind the fact of my being a whited sepulchre. Let me enjoy the goods the gods have sent me. That confounded Morton! he is always at Miss Courtland's elbow, and when he succeeds in engaging her to dance before I do, he looks at me with his insolent smile.

February 15th.—Morton's malice is unspeakable. Feeling convinced as I do that he suspects my secret, it is positive torture to see him talk to Miss Courtland as he did last night. He evidently spoke of me, and she listened to him, looking at me meanwhile with a surprised expression. That man has me in his power.

February 20th.—I feel that it is unprincipled to send Miss Courtland flowers, for two reasons—first, because I cannot do it and pay my bills as well; secondly, because it adds to my deception in making a friend of her, and yet I cannot resist the temptation to show her my admiration.

February 21st.—Matters are coming to a climax. Last night Miss Courtland said, with a dignified sweetness that was irresistible: "Mr. Valentine, I

have noticed that you have never been to see me. I have not asked you, because I supposed you would feel at liberty to come after having dined with my uncle."

"I assure you, Miss Courtland," I said, "I should of course have done so, but the truth is I have had a slight misunderstanding with your uncle, and I do not feel that I can go to his house."

Of course I added a lie to the rest of my duplicity. Her face was lighted with a charming smile. "That is no reason for not coming; you owe my uncle a call at all events. I will be at home to-morrow—no, Thursday afternoon. Come in about five o'clock, and I will give you a cup of tea. My uncle is never at home until six o'clock, and when he does come in, never sees visitors. Even if you do meet him, it will be a good opportunity to make your peace with him."

In a kind of dream I recklessly consented.

Morton came pushing up at that moment.

"By the way, Miss Courtland," he said, "will you be at home Thursday afternoon? If so, with your permission, I will call upon you."

Of course he had overheard me, and wished to irritate me. Fortunately some one spoke to Miss Courtland at that moment, and she turned away without having heard Morton. For once my anger flamed out. I caught him by the arm, and held it like a vise.

"Be careful," I said, between my teeth. "This sort of thing may go too far."

He gave me a furious look, and shaking me off, left the room.

February 22d. Two A.M.—My brain is reeling. My world is upside down. There is no use in trying to sleep. I will write down what has happened. It may calm me. This evening when I entered the house where I was to entertain others at the expense of my self-respect, I found I was before the time. The rooms were empty, with the exception of my hostess, a very old lady, who held a formidable ear-trumpet in her hand. Preceding me down the brightly lighted room was a gentleman. There was something unpleasantly familiar in the cut of his coat and the carriage of his head. It was my evil genius, Morton. I made up my mind to wait until some one else came, before going in. As I stood in the background this scene was enacted before me :

Morton bowed. The old lady looked blankly at him.

" I am Mr. Morton, madam," said he.

She continued to stare at him, and then held out her trumpet. Morton took it, and repeated his words into its depths.

" Horton ?" she said, interrogatively.

" Morton," he called.

" Oh yes, Lawton—Mr. Lawton."

" Morton !" he fairly shouted.

" Oh yes," she said, intelligence breaking over her face. " Morton—Mr. Morton, from the Globe office. Where's the other ? There were to have

been two. Just take care of yourself, please, for a moment. I have to go and see about something."

She tottered out of the room, and Morton, turning, confronted me. He saw that I had overheard all. Before I could speak he came toward me with an air of desperation.

"For Heaven's sake don't betray me, Valentine, now that you know my secret," he exclaimed. "I have felt from the first that you suspected—that I was in your power. I throw myself on your mercy. In your safe and prosperous condition you don't know—you can't know—what a frightful position I am in."

My face must have changed in some ghastly manner as he spoke, for he stopped and looked at me with deepening consternation.

"What is it? What's the matter?" he asked.

I saw my mistake, and tried to look unconcerned, but at that moment the old lady came back into the room.

"Oh, there's the other," she said, as she saw me. "His name's Valentine, so that's all right."

Several people came into the room, and she went forward to greet them. Morton looked at me in dazed silence for a minute; then he seemed to master his astonishment by a mighty effort.

"So," he said, huskily, "we are quits. I am in your power, but you are equally in mine. Be careful how you interfere with me."

We did not speak again together during the evening. What is to be the end of this? To-

morrow I go to see Miss Courtland, and I have made up my mind to confess everything. Perhaps she will think no worse of me. The queen still loved Ruy Blas after she found he was a lackey.

What nonsense am I dreaming of?

February 23d.—The game is up. I went this afternoon to Mr. Courtland's house, and found Miss Courtland at home, alone. She was in a dim little room, with the firelight flickering on her beautiful face. She saw that I was constrained and anxious, and at once asked me the reason. Something in her kind manner broke down my composure.

"Miss Courtland," I said, "how would you feel if I were to confess that I have been deceiving you —that I am not what I seem to be?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, anxiously.

"Tell me first," I said, "that whatever I tell you, you will still be my friend, and will believe me when I say that I have not wished to deceive you—that I have bitterly regretted it."

She looked at me with a frank smile. "You may depend upon me."

In a few words I told her everything from the time of my going to the Globe office up to that moment. She listened gravely; then she turned to me again with a smile.

"You have told me nothing dishonorable (although you can surely find something better to do), and I will still be your friend. I am glad you

told me, for Mr. Morton said some things about you last night that made me fear—"

This was too hard, and I interrupted her.

"Morton!" I said. "Morton is the last person to dare to say anything against me."

Here I checked myself, but Miss Courtland's curiosity was aroused.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Nothing," I said. "I will not talk of Morton; it is enough that you are still my friend."

"Certainly I am," she said.

She held out her hand as she spoke, and I took it and raised it to my lips. At the same moment two people entered the room by different doors. One was Mr. Courtland; the other, Morton. Mr. Courtland seemed stupefied with astonishment, for he stood motionless, but Morton strode toward me.

"How dare you!" he gasped. "I will expose you."

His audacity was too much for my self-control.

"Morton," I said, in a low tone, "as your position is the same as mine, I warn you to be careful of what you say."

I spoke louder than I intended, and Miss Courtland heard my words. She gave Morton a keen look.

"Ah! now I understand!" she exclaimed, as if involuntarily.

As she said this Morton became very white, and muttering something about a broken engagement,

with a hasty good-by to Mr. Courtland, left the room. He had gone a step too far at last. Mr. Courtland had by this time recovered from his astonishment.

"What do you mean by this astounding impertinence!" he exclaimed, coming toward me. He turned to his niece: "Helen, do you know on what terms this man first came here? I hired him—hired him from the Globe Employment Bureau to fill an empty place at my dinner-table. I did not warn you against him, for I thought you would not meet him again. I trusted also to his sense of decency, but I was mistaken. Your honesty was guaranteed, sir. You have not taken my silver, but you have done worse. This shall be reported to the Globe Employment Bureau immediately. First, leave this house. I shall go at once to the Globe office."

He paused for an instant.

"My dear uncle," said Miss Courtland, quietly, "Mr. Valentine has just told me all this himself. He only came here because I asked him to come."

Mr. Courtland would not listen to any explanations, but only repeated his assertion that he would report me at the Globe office. There was nothing for me to do but to go.

I gave Miss Courtland one look of gratitude, then I left the house. I have but two consolations: one, that Miss Courtland still trusts me; the other, that Morton is as badly off as I am—rather worse.

My dismissal from the Globe has just come. It

is a relief to be free from this bondage, but I am as much in debt as usual, and what am I to do in the future?

February 24th.—A light is beginning to break on my dark horizon. I have just received a note from Miss Courtland telling me that her uncle has been pacified by her explanations; that as I am no longer in the employ of the Globe, I am at liberty to come to his house; and that she is sure I will find something better to do in the future.

I can't help thinking of Ruy Blas and the queen again. I feel like Ruy Blas come back to life, and *my* queen is not married.

STELLA GRAYLAND.

By James T. McKay.

"SO Miss Brainard's father's gone, Doctor." It was the young minister's clear, hearty voice that spoke. "I feel very sorry for Miss Brainard, very sorry indeed. He has been a great care to her, and it's a release to both, no doubt; but it leaves a great void. She's very good and useful, and she has been a faithful daughter. She's very much overcome; it seems to her as if she were alone in the world."

Dr. Enfield's heart smote him. He knew Cora Brainard much better than the minister, who had not been very long in the place, but his thought of her had not been gentle of late. The picture of her in such trouble affected him with a remorseful tenderness. He turned his horse and drove to her door.

He found her alone; she had been crying, and looked tremulous and downcast, but was trim and

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pretty, as always. She called him Lawrence and asked him in, then nestled herself childishly in the corner of the sofa and dried her eyes. Enfield stood before her, remembering many things.

"I am very sorry, Cora," he said. "Can I do anything for you?"

He spoke low and with something like contrition.

"You're long in coming to show it," she complained. "You've been very unkind."

"I used to come quick enough and often enough," he rejoined in the subdued tone.

"Yes, and then you stayed away of a sudden, and when I asked you the reason, you laughed at me and deserted me altogether, when you knew I looked to you for advice and assistance, and had most need of them."

Her reproach stung him. The charge of unfaithfulness to a friend was one he took keenly. There was a mingled sternness and entreaty in his voice when he replied:

"Won't you let that go now? This is no time for bandying reproaches. I think I was your faithful friend for a long while. If I failed in my duty to you, I am sure I did not know it. And if I changed, it was because I thought I had been mistaken and had been going for years with my eyes shut. I thought I had been a fool and it was time —— but that's of no account now. I am your friend still; let me prove it."

But she persisted in her high, child-like complaint.

"Was it my fault, then, you had not seen me, truly? I never tried to deceive you. I always put confidence in you and talked frankly to you, as I never did to any one else. And you know I've had a hard time. I was never meant for the tiresome, lonely life I've had. I never wanted to be a pattern and model of usefulness and self-forgetfulness, but they would have me so, and I couldn't go out in the streets and tell them I was not. I've had to play the part till I'm tired. I've had to walk demurely, and talk and smile to people I despised, and do all sorts of miserable things. But I never pretended to you. You knew I was not satisfied or happy. I used to tell you all my troubles and ask your advice about everything. And you know you said harsh things to me sometimes. You knew me better than any one else, and I did not think you would ever treat me so. Did you think only of what was due to yourself, and that our long friendship and the reliance you had encouraged me to place in you gave me no claim upon you?"

Her words hurt and agitated him greatly. Was she right? and had he been doubly blind? In this grieved, reproachful, petulant humor, she seemed a different being from the Cora Brainard he had had in his thought these last months; she was the little girl that the big boy, Lawrence Enfield, had protected and drawn on his sled, the maiden he had cherished in his heart for many a day; and he had been purer and braver for the thought of

her. Did he owe her nothing for that? He was very sensitive to people's claims upon him. His heart bled and was afraid for her. He could not see her way. He knew she had had a hard time, —harder than people dreamed. They thought her long service and support of her invalid father were made easy by a love of duty and by exceptional ability. Enfield knew that, though she had rare tact and succeeded admirably, all sordid care and labor were extremely repugnant to her. She had said she never had anything she liked; he would have expressed it, that she never liked anything she had. He thought that a very melancholy case. That she liked the society of spirited young men, he had learned to his sorrow more than once or twice; or, at least, that they were very apt to like her; but they were all sent (or went) about their business one after another.

Enfield had a friend named Loramer, who had been one of the spirited fellows at one time, and the episode had been a severe strain upon their friendship. It was a summer vacation of Loramer's, when he made Miss Brainard's acquaintance, and he had found her bright, piquant face, and light, laughing chatter very appetizing. He met her upon riding and sailing parties, sat and walked and drove with her. Enfield avoided them both awhile, then spoke offensively to Loramer, and got scornful laughter in reply. They did not meet again for some time.

One evening Loramer brought Cora home from

a drive. He lifted her out, and they stood talking there together under the trees. He made an appointment to go rowing with her the next day, and they parted, with some show of reluctance on his part, and low laughter on hers.

He scratched a match and lighted a cigar, as he drove down the street. As he passed through the town, he saw some one going before him on the foot-path. He let his horse walk, and watched the man till he turned a corner. He turned the horse after him, overtook him, and stopped opposite and said :

" Enfield, come and ride."

He stood by a tree a minute or two, looking, then came and got in.

They rode along, each in his corner.

" Have a cigar ?" said Loramer.

" No," answered Enfield.

Loramer took his own from his mouth and flung it away. He struck the horse with the whip, Enfield put his hand on the reins, and said, steadily :

" Don't do that, the mare's willing enough ; she's tired."

Loramer pulled her up, and let her walk a mile or more, up among the hills ; then he turned her and rattled back toward the village, and stopped before his own lodging. He asked Enfield to hold the horse and went in. In a little while he came out and put a valise in the wagon.

" What time does the night train pass ?"

"12.05."

He drove to the station, gave Enfield the reins, and put the valise on the platform, then stood on the step of the wagon.

"Drive the horse to Mitchel's for me and tell him to send me his bill."

He lingered a moment, then offered his hand.

"Good-night, Lawrence!"

"Good-night!" and they held each other's hands firmly but gravely.

"Will you take a cigar now, Lawrence?"

"Yes!"

Loramer thrust his cigar-case into his hand, wheeled round and marched into the waiting-room, holding the valise with a strong grasp, and putting his head a little on one side.

That affair was a part of the long, slow process of Enfield's alienation from Cora, but only one of many steps. He was tenacious and slow to change, and she held him by cords of memory and dependence as well as affection. But by degrees he came to see clearly that he had been wilfully blind, that he had always known but would not regard that she was not at all the girl he had enshrined. The end was but a trifle—the proverbial last straw. And though he laughed when she took him to task and felt a barbarous enjoyment in their reversed relations, and in her show of something like consternation, he more than once afterwad felt the yearning of the converted heathen toward his broken gods.

Loramer and Enfield spent a week together on Cape Cod the same summer and took refuge from a storm in one of the huts provided for shipwrecked people. Listening to the deafening roar of the wind and the surf, they spoke of Cora Brainard. Loramer congratulated Lawrence upon his freedom. And he went on :

"I don't know what there is in the little minx. All the old ladies in Elmtree think her a kind of saint, but she didn't strike me in that light. She came near making a —— fool of me, but I can't remember anything she said, only how she laughed and her eyes sparkled."

"I can't laugh at her," Enfield answered. "She hasn't made herself and she hasn't had a good time. She doesn't know anything and doesn't care for anything. She has a wonderful tact, an eye for color, and an instinct for the current fashion in what goes for literature and art. But she has no appreciation of anything permanent and no lasting enjoyment of anything. I think that is terrible. I can't think of anything much more pitiable."

Enfield lounged against the wall ; Loramer watched him awhile, listening to the storm booming without, as he lay stretched on the straw. Then he went on :

"Do you think she's a good girl, Lawrence? It wouldn't be quite safe for her to run on with some fellows as she did with me."

He caught Enfield's eye.

"No, it wasn't quite safe for her to run on so

with me. She's either very innocent, or very artful, or very reckless, I don't know which. If she is good, she's very, very good."

He laughed, but Lawrence smoked soberly and silent.

"Young Harlow, the ensign, was her last capture, wasn't he?"

Enfield nodded, gravely.

"They say he was over his head, and would have given up the navy and flouted his people and everything, if she would have taken him, but she wouldn't let him sacrifice himself. That was a strange affair of theirs—being lost on a sleigh-ride and snowed up two days across the mountain. I never could understand it; both of them knew the country, and none of the rest of the party found much trouble."

"I don't know," Enfield answered, slowly. "I wasn't taking as much interest in her movements just then as I had been. I cut adrift about the time she took Harlow in tow; I suppose she thought I was jealous, and perhaps I was. I don't know how they managed it, but he left very suddenly, and she was sick about that time."

All these things, and many more, surged through Enfield's mind now, as he stood before her and was swayed by her unrestrained upbraiding. She said that he had stood in her way, that she had put her trust in him and given him such a near place that others had been kept from her. He found

that hard to swallow. He turned from her and threw himself into an arm-chair, with his face away from her, and chewed the bitter accusation.

Finally she came slowly and stood beside him a minute or two, then said sadly, laying her hand on his arm :

" Forgive me, Lawrence, if I have said too much ; I am in trouble ; you will help me, will you not ?"

" Yes, I will do anything I can for you," he answered. " Have you made any plans ?"

She shook her head slowly.

" No ; I don't know what I am to do. I can't live alone, and there's no one here I can live with. They don't know me and yet think they do, and they expect me to be always playing the character they have invented for me. I'm tired to death, and I want you to tell me what to do."

He sat with her awhile longer, then went away, and thought of her all night, and went back to her in the morning.

Loramer made him a visit soon after that. They sat up late together. When they were separating at Loramer's door, he laid his arm across Enfield's shoulder, and they looked into each other's eyes.

" Are you going to marry Cora Brainard, Lawrence ?" he asked.

" Yes."

They continued to look at each other for a long breath.

" Are my eyes sound ?" asked Enfield, but neither smiled.

"Yes, sound and true," answered Loramer, "but too deep for me."

The wedding came off a month later. Enfield had insisted upon Loramer standing up with him. "This must make no difference between you and me, Harry," he had said. Cora looked very pretty, and bore herself with a demure dignity which Loramer could not but admire. He got an idea of her then which he found hard to reconcile with his recollections. Enfield himself discovered an unsuspected capacity for enjoyment in her.

They came back from the wedding-journey, and she took command of his house. And as they settled into the routine of home life and occupations, Enfield began to think of carrying out certain plans which he had had in mind.

Two or three months before his return to Cora, he had met a young lady whom he had known slightly for some years, named Stella Grayland. She was not strikingly beautiful, but of very pleasing appearance, fresh, rosy, and intelligent. But the charm Enfield found in her was her manner and what it suggested. Though entirely simple, her walking, standing, sitting, speaking, were perfectly poised. In all her motions and attitudes she made you think of some smooth and balanced mechanism which, however it turned, or went, or stopped, was still in no danger of going awry. She could stand still and sit still, and to see her do either was good for the eyes. She was not fluent in speech, but when she began you might be sure

she would get to the end of what she set out to say and stop when she got to the end. The simplest things took a rhythmical quality in her mouth, and clung to the memory with an agreeable tenacity.

Happy, thoughtful, modest, steadfast Stella Grayland had struck Enfield as the reverse of Cora Brainard, and he found the secret of the salient difference in the fact that Stella had had a thorough training in one direction. Her father was a musician, and his daughter had inherited his faculty and cultivated it by assiduous study at home and abroad. Coming away from her, Enfield had reflected how any ennobling pursuit broadens and deepens the whole character, as a journey up the latitudes on any side of the world gives one the main features of all, and makes the rest intelligible.

If Cora had had the guidance of some strong, wise hand to set her right at the start, and lead her along the arduous beginning of some such path, until her feet found their strength and the growing joy of walking, and her eyes learned the delight of the ever-widening and brightening prospect !—the thought of what might have been filled him with strong regret and pity. She had only had the training of sordid care and uncongenial tasks and associations. He was estranged from her then, and had been thinking hardly of her ; but when he heard of her in trouble at her father's death, the pitiful yearning swept away all unkind-

ness, and brought him back to her side. And that night, after she had appealed to him in such an abandoned humor, she seemed to him quite the child still and fit to learn of one who understood her, and had her confidence and the right to be with her a great deal. Who was there that knew her or could help her but he? It was in no proud spirit that he had answered. He wandered under the stars, and was humble enough and lonely enough, God knew. He went back through the years, and gathered all the forgotten tenderness and trust between them. He felt again the purifying stimulus of his thought of her, and perceived how it had fostered all of him that was brave and of good report. Whether or not he had deceived himself; whether she were truly the girl he had seen or not, the fact remained that he owed her, or his thought of her, a great deal. What was truth? Are there not as many worlds as eyes that see them? Are we sure there is any world outside the eye? Does not truth consist in standing by what one's eyes report? What better proof could there be of a thing's reality than that it had held you long, shaped and lifted and led you? Cora Brainard had been the most powerful modifying circumstance of his life.

It seemed to him that night that God had set before him a solemn trust, and that there was every reason why he should assume it. And slowly and reverently he took it up.

And now that she was his wife, he was anxious

to begin the course he had determined to pursue. Cora had received the ordinary schooling of girls, but had somehow missed the true education. Her acquirements were a surface gloss merely, Enfield knew. She had never been touched by the sacred fire. She could not tell a good book from a poor one, he had said to Loramer. But he had taken her, and his heart yearned toward the companion of his choice. Yet there could be no true companionship where there was no common view or interest. It seemed to him that she had never learned the right use of her eyes, that the few and little things close to her shut out the sight of the great and innumerable company beyond, as if one reared among city streets should never see either the earth or the sky. He would teach her to use them, would show her the awe and beauty of the world. They would read together; he would find a new charm and inspiration in his loved books; she would catch his enthusiasm and insensibly learn the delight and true cultivation of all that is great and good.

He found no chance to begin for a long time. She was very busy and seemed very happy. There was the house to set in order, his friends and hers to entertain; she was learning to ride. But by and by came winter and shut them in more alone. He got out his books and proposed their reading together, and was pleased to find she welcomed the plan. She read with a clear intonation and a careful regard for pointing and pronunciation;

but somehow as he listened to her the strength and flavor of his favorite authors escaped between the words. Her idea of reading poetry seemed to be that it should sound exactly like prose. She had apparently no conception of anything like rhythm, and seemed to think it a special grace to avoid any slightest pause at the end of a line when it could be done ; so that the mind was kept on a strain to catch at the rhyme and measure. He said nothing, but one night took the book himself. He read things to her that had made his heart throb and dimmed his eyes, or filled him with delightful laughter, and they wearied or puzzled her, and seemed cold and sterile to himself. He began to lose courage, but he persevered. One night he read to her in Ruskin's eloquent prose, and came to that powerful and impassioned, if somewhat mystical, interpretation of the Laureate's noble song :

" Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown."

He read on to the end. When he stopped he hoped she would not speak ; he felt by anticipation the jar of her clear cold voice. But she did not speak. Her face was in the shadow, but he could see without turning his head that her bosom heaved and

heaved. She was touched,—she understood. With a rush came a thought that the splendid song symbolized their relation. It was he who stood at the gate, alone, and called her out from "the dancers dancing in tune." He had almost wearied of calling, but she heard,—at last she heard!

"There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, She is near,'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait!'"

There was silence a while in the room; then he moved very gently and looked in her face. There was a smile on her lips, and her eyes were closed. She was asleep.

He left her there and went out. It was cold and still; the stars glittered, the earth was white. He walked far on the frozen snow, with a feeling as hard and cold as the bitter air. Some impish sprite seemed to mock him with the closing strain of the song:

"She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red."

All the charm had gone out of the words. Were such passionate yearnings actual, or at best more than empty delusions? He had yearned so toward her; she had been "his life, his fate." His fate, truly, but was she not rather his death? What kind of creature was it that words like those could not move? She cast a blight upon the noblest things, made him doubt and disbelieve where before he had walked with firm feet. And she was his fate; he was bound to her by his own hand. She sat there now by his table, and there she would sit and sit. The picture made his house seem a prison. He must go back there by and by. The thought of living at variance was very bitter to him, yet how could they prevent it who had nothing in common, whose instincts drew opposite ways. He was unequally yoked with an unbeliever.

The village clock recalled him from that dismal reverie. He had a call to make at the Marlakes'; the children were all three sick. Kate Marlake had been a Grayland, and her sister Stella was recently come to stay with her through that trying time. Lawrence gave one of the children a soothing potion, and said he would wait to see the effect. He went down-stairs, and Kate sent Stella to keep him company. She asked him about the children, and he explained to her the "self-limited" character of the disease and the necessity that they should grow worse before they could be better, but assured her there was no present cause for alarm.

And while he thus reassured her, she was unconsciously exerting a more powerful influence upon him. Her steady, balanced carriage, her quiet, straight, brief questions, her direct glance, her strong but controlled interest, the simple grace with which she sat afterward, altogether affected him with a great tenderness, mingled with despair. Why could not Cora be like that? Was it so hard to be simple, gracious, modestly satisfied? It seemed very easy in Stella's presence. She did not say much; her words were fit and sincere, to be sure, but simple and few, and as like as not to end with a depreciating, low, lapsing laugh. But somehow she made all brave and gentle and generous things seem easy and very desirable. Lawrence looked up from his abstraction and found her watching him.

"Don't you miss your music?" he asked.

"Well," she answered, with her low laugh, "it would hardly be gracious to say I do, when Kate needs me so badly, — and hardly true to say no."

Lawrence recalled a remark of Dr. Kane's; — how when, on one of his voyages, in their ice-girt winter quarters, the whole ship's company, save himself, were prostrate below decks, and he with incredible strength and fortitude was literally doing everything, not even omitting to register regular observations of the instruments; — in the midst of that unsurpassable heroism among the polar solitudes, he felt at night a dissatisfaction

with the day as having been spent to little purpose worthy of his powers.

Stella listened, and was still a moment before she answered :

" Yes, I can understand that."

That was it. She could understand. She knew what he was talking about ; she knew and cared. He had always remarked her peculiarly melodious, low voice ; he thought now he had never heard one so expressive. It was never either loud or faint, but exquisitely modulated, like all her motions. He could say things to her ; when he began to talk to Cora, his words came back upon him as in an echoing hall, and smothered him with the sound of his own voice. Stella Grayland, sitting composedly, saying little, stirred him like noble music, —made him strong and fervid.

They talked of many things, the dark background of his thought giving a sombre undertone to his part. They came back to music.

" You enjoy it as much as ever ?" he asked.

" Oh, yes," she answered ; " I think it grows constantly upon you. One's deficiencies become painfully clearer, and bad music seems to increase and become more of a trial. But it is a satisfaction to feel that one grows a little, taking the years together ; and it is very pleasant to know that there will always be plenty to learn and enjoy."

She ended with a little sigh.

He was looking at her, but he only said :

" Yes."

Her words exactly expressed his feeling for literature. He felt as if they two had been climbing the same hill by different paths, and stood side by side for a moment looking up to the heights beyond that rose one above another,—where over the dark pine forests the glittering snow-peaks pierced the sky and the rivers of ice shone gloriously.

Kate came to tell them that Jenny was asleep, and they went up softly. Lawrence wrote out his directions for the night and came down, Stella accompanying him. At the door he paused a moment abstractedly.

"Don't you think it's a great loss for a person to miss the pleasure and appreciation of a noble art?" he asked, seriously.

She looked at him questioningly, but replied:

"Yes, it makes me very sorry sometimes; it is a great loss. But I reflect that there are a great many people who get on without it, and they seem quite contented and happy. I think those who have the advantage of the finer influences and delights should be very good and try to prevent the younger ones from growing up without caring for such things."

"Yes, that is true," he replied, and he went on with suppressed agitation: "But suppose one should grow up blind to all art and yet not contented or happy, without any true knowledge, or faith, or cultivation but the outward seeming, unsettled, unsatisfied, hungering for one knows not what, despising all that one has?"

He leaned back, and neither spoke for a moment. She turned either way with a shuddering movement.

"That would be terrible," she answered. "But do you think there are any so unfortunate?"

"Yes, there are some," he returned; "I hope indeed not many."

"And can nothing be done for them?"

"I don't know. I am afraid not."

"Oh, I think you should not say that," she continued, warmly; "their friends should not despair. It would be like saving a soul from death!"

"Thank you," he said. "Good-night!" He offered his hand, and she gave him hers frankly.

He came away softened and humbled; the night was not so hard and cold now. All that was compassionate and unselfish in him was re-enforced, and the view of his better nature confirmed. His feeling toward Cora was only gentle and pitiful.

But there was a difference between them thenceforth that he could not equalize. He saw that the novelty and excitation of her altered position were going from her and that the quiet of the early winter was growing irksome. She said nothing, but he got the feeling of having a child in the house whose playthings were worn out and whom he felt bound to entertain. It unsettled and fretted him. He was necessarily at the Marlakes' a great deal for some time, and his admiration for Stella grew with the sight of her unwearied and skilful care of the little ones; through the most trying scenes she was steadfast, though deeply con-

cerned ; she executed his directions with exactness. She was never taken at a disadvantage ; under all circumstances she was the same simple, friendly, self-respectful, admirable person. He was always the better for seeing her ; however confused and wrong-sided the world might seem, at sight or sound of her all things fell into order and marched to unheard music. He did not disguise from himself that he went to see the Marlake children oftener than he would have gone to others ; he knew he was glad to go there and knew the reason. He asked himself why he should not. He did not know how he should get on without this resource. His wife soon wore out his better feelings ; sometimes he was in a rage with her, sometimes affected with a great melancholy ; she could not rest at home unless there were people there ; she wanted to be at all meetings, fairs, parties, lectures, concerts. She would talk with most people glibly enough, catching the cue of each with wonderful adroitness and echoing each after his kind. Most people thought her charming when she cared to charm ; to be confirmed in one's opinions by such pretty, vivacious eyes and lips few men would find distasteful. To Lawrence she had nothing to say. She knew that he knew that she had nothing worth saying. She resented his penetration ; she resented his pity ; and pity was the only light in which he found the thought of her tolerable. He had thought to show her through his eyes widening vistas of beauty and grandeur ; and instead

he caught glimpses through hers of awful heights and depths of vacancy, peopled only by thinly veiled phantoms of darkness and horror. But she could not look with his eyes, and if she caught sight of such dismal prospects now and then she could not be expected to want to look that way; it was as if she sailed with a strong swimmer to whom she instinctively looked for help and succor when storms came, but who could do nothing in fair weather but steer the boat. A cloud or a breaking wave might remind her of tempest and dark depths full of cruel creatures, but while the sun shone and the sea was smooth she could hardly be blamed for preferring merrier company than one who was forever on the lookout for foul weather, and whose gravity and very reserve power of succor were suggestive of distasteful things.

They came to no open rupture; what was there to say? His prevailing mood toward her was compassion as for a lost soul. But many times that mood broke down by its own weight. Her light, child-like laugh, her high, clear voice talking so glibly and cheerily to people whom, as like as not, he knew she despised, came to him with a hollow, heartless ring that was maddening. He could not study; he could think of nothing worthy. He would rush away from the sound that he was frightened to perceive was becoming hateful. And the unconscious influence of Stella was always a steadying and restoring one. He believed he should never have married Cora but for the stimu-

lus to his compassion that he got from her. He did not know what he should do now but for her stimulus of his forebearance, his tenderness, his whole better nature. But the children got well by and by, and Stella went away. Then Enfield stumbled along as best he could.

Some time afterward Lawrence had a letter from a friend: "I have an opening here for a young surgeon of parts and character. It will be the making of some one. Can you send me the name of some young fellow you can recommend?"

Now, Lawrence happened to know that Stella had a cousin, a young surgeon; in fact, she had asked him about his chance of success in that part of the country. He now invited young Winlock to come down and make him a visit with a view to recommending him. He was a handsome, lively young fellow, and Lawrence liked him from the first. He and Cora got on well together, and Lawrence found the house pleasanter than he had for a long time.

Stella came back to Elmtree two or three weeks later. Kate had felt the long strain after it was over, and had stumbled and broken down. Stella quickly perceived some things about her cousin that troubled her. One morning he came on some errand, and she detained him. He was a frank fellow, and he and Stella were good friends. She made him come and sit with her. She talked to him and watched him. He took out his watch and rose to go. She stood up before him.

"Eugene," she said, "where are you going, now?"

The tall fellow looked down at her and changed color.

"I am going to ride."

"With Mrs. Enfield?"

"Yes," he answered, doggedly.

She looked away slowly and then back, till their eyes met again. She spoke in a lower voice than usual, but steadily.

"What do you think of Mrs. Enfield?"

He did not turn away his eyes, but his face grew haggard.

"I think she's an angel," he said.

She threw herself into the chair beside her without moving her feet, and sat with her hands together in her lap, and her face bent out of his sight. He turned back, shaken and helpless. Her attitude affected him more than any words. Presently he came round and took her head between his hands.

"Don't fret about me, Stel," he said. "I'm not worth it."

She sat up straight.

"Eugene, you must go away."

He turned away his head.

"I can't," he said.

She stood up.

"Come here a moment."

She led him to Kate's sick-room.

"Awake, Katy? You slept nicely. You feel

better now. Here's Eugene come to see you. I have got to go out, and Lizzie's busy, so Eugene will sit in the next room and call her if you want anything. Good-by, dear!"

She was gone before he could say a word. In fifteen minutes she was in Dr. Enfield's parlor. A riding whip and hat lay on a table. She walked from them to the back of the room. Cora came down in her habit. She had a cheerful greeting on her lips, and advanced toward Stella, but stopped half way; and Stella backed a step.

"Will you take a seat, Miss Grayland?" Cora said, with cold politeness.

"No," she answered, only half conscious of her words, a burning shame and aversion enveloping her like a cloud and shutting out sight and sound. "I have come to tell you that my cousin is not going to ride—and—"

Cora was staring with a horrified expression past Stella's head. She interrupted:

"That will do, Miss Grayland. Lawrence, you had better come in."

Stella turned. The door behind her into Lawrence's office stood open; he had come in unheard, and was leaning against the door-post, white in the face. Stella was startled, but she only bowed distantly and came out of the house. This was not altogether new to Lawrence; he had felt vaguely fearful before. Cora turned her back to him and looked out of the window; the prospect was sunny and bright with spring's promise, but

it did not look so to her. He came forward and stood beside her.

"So you are at the old game again," he said. "What do you suppose will be the end if you keep on?"

She answered without turning or lifting her head, and in a hard bitter voice:

"You are both jealous. And it does not become you who wore such a long face because she went away. I suppose you can see now that she cares more for some one else."

She caught sight of his face, and would have slipped past him, but he stood before her. Then she was afraid. He was afraid of himself; he had to keep back his hands from taking hold of her.

"Do not ever speak to me like that again," he said, slowly, after a little. "You are not fit—" but he broke off, and left her abruptly.

Stella sent Eugene away the same evening. After that she avoided Lawrence; there was something abhorrent to all her instincts in meeting him now with that repulsive understanding between them. And, for his part, that detestable suggestion of Cora's put upon Enfield a kindred restraint and at the same time gave him the key to Stella's feeling, so that her influence upon him was rather strengthened than otherwise by the reserve which came between them.

Enfield wrote to his medical friend soon afterward, recommending young Winlock to his favor-

able notice ; and in due time an arrangement was made to the young surgeon's advantage. When Stella knew that the affair was pleasantly completed, she took the first opportunity to thank Enfield frankly and warmly. And the warmth he brought away from the brief interview was one that helped him to be gentle and forbearing at home and altogether true ; and it did not cease to help him when Kate Marlake got up again and he saw Stella less and less often, nor even when, by and by, she went away South again.

Months passed by and made a heavy drain on all his resources. He found life hard to endure. One day, when it seemed quite intolerable and he was casting vainly about, his heart went out to his old friend Loramer. He went to see him. The grip and smile of the fellow warmed him like wine. They spent the day together. He brought Loramer home with him. They sat, walked, rode, talked together by day and by night, and were happy. They said nothing about Cora, but thought many things. The little that Loramer saw of her, he chaffed and made merry. One day, looking for Lawrence, he found him out, and Cora alone. She bade him come and sit down, and began a chat, but he would only laugh and answer quizzingly, working cat's cradles with her worsted and big needles. She grew silent under his banter, eying him furtively and stitching away with her head bent. After a while he held a comical figure before her face. She could not help joining in his

laugh, but she stopped short, and began to sob and cry. She stood up, letting her work go where it would.

"You've no business to laugh at me, Harry Loramer," she complained. "You and Lawrence are chatting and laughing all day and all night, and have no more regard for my feelings than if I were wood or stone."

She hid her face, and went out sobbing. Loramer laughed less after that. Lawrence had to take a long ride, and Loramer proposed they should all go together. He and Cora rode on a little way while Lawrence made his call. They rode together every day after that, but Lawrence could not always be one of the party.

Naturally, Lawrence and Loramer found less to talk about, and sat less together. When his time came, Lawrence did not press Loramer to stay, but he did not go. Three days later Lawrence came home and met Loramer coming out of the house. Their greeting was brief and cold. Lawrence went in and found Cora.

He could not speak at first.

"What deviltry are you at now?" he demanded.

She tried to pass out, but he took hold of her by the shoulders, and made her hear.

"Listen to me," he said. "Do you know what you are doing? If you have no shame or pity, have you no fear? Don't try me too far, I tell you it's not safe."

His grasp hurt her cruelly, but she kept her head away, and made no sound.

Two hours later, Lawrence came home again and found no one in his house. He had a call to make to the west. Three miles out he turned into a bridle-path that led up to a height. Presently he came in sight of the top. The shadows were thick about him, but above the sunset flushed splendidly. On the crest sat two riders, close together. He bowed his head and rode away.

"Harry, you are a coward!" Cora was saying. "Oh, I wish I were a man!" She raised her arm with a passionate gesture. "We loved each other from the first, and he drove you away. I never cared for him; I had to marry him. And I tell you we live in misery. We are nothing but a torment to each other. And you do not know him. He is in love with another woman, and he is cruel. Look here!"

She threw back her mantle and slid her supple shoulder out of her dress.

"Those are the marks of his fingers!"

His gaze was bent upon her, his eyes seemed drawn beyond his control; he trembled, and caught his breath. But he broke the spell. He sat up. He found his voice, thick and low:

"Don't tempt me. I am his friend; you are his wife."

She looked to right and left, then turned and took hold of his arm.

"Listen to me!" she commanded. "Bend

down your head,—lower, lower!" She looked in his face intently; she put her own close and said, "I am not his wife!"

A dumb, incredulous stare was his reply. He frowned and shook his head.

"You don't believe me?" she cried. "Come home, I will show you."

She turned her horse, struck him with the whip, and plunged recklessly down the steep path. He could not overtake her till she reined up and walked through the village street.

"Go into the parlor," she said, "and wait till I come."

She ran up-stairs. She asked for Lawrence. He was out,—would not be back till eight. She looked at her watch. Not quite seven. From a locked drawer she took a locked jewel-box and from under the lining a written paper with a printed slip pinned to it.

She came down and into the parlor with her hand in her pocket, walked up to Loramer where he stood before the fire, gave him the paper, and sat down to watch him. It was a certificate of marriage between Cora Brainard and Clarence A. Harlow, dated three years back, and signed by an eccentric clergyman, across the mountain. A feeling of sickness came over Loramer.

"Then you are Harlow's wife," he said.

"No, I am no man's wife," she answered, impatiently. "Read on; read the newspaper slip."

He read: "On board U. S. S. 'Tuscaloosa,' off

Cherbourg, Oct. 20th, Ensign Clarence A. Harlow, aged twenty-four, by the bursting of a gun."

As Loramer lifted his eyes the door opened and Lawrence came in. Cora uttered a low cry and reached for the paper, but Lawrence's look frightened her so that she fell back into her chair. He kept his eyes upon her, but went toward Loramer and reached out a cigar-case which he brought in his hand.

"Here's your cigar-case," he said. "You'd better take it back."

Loramer swore at the case, and flung it into the fire.

"Look here!" he cried. "Read that." He thrust it before his face. "Go on! Do you see? She was his wife when she married you. You're a free man!"

A brutal exultation seized Lawrence. He shouted and laughed,—"Ha ha, ha ha ha! She's made fools of us both. You can have her, Harry, and welcome. I wish you joy. Ha ha, ha ha ha! She's the devil! she's the devil!"

Loramer answered with harsh and scornful hilarity. Neither took any other notice of her sitting there, sunken together, crushed, hiding her face with her hands. Loramer turned away and ran tramping up the stairs, crammed his things into his valise, and came tramping down. Lawrence was backed against the post at the stair-foot. Loramer grasped his arm in passing. "By-bye! Come and see us," he called. He went out and

banged the door, and they heard his hoarse laughter far down the quiet street.

To Cora that laughter sounded like the knell at the end of all things. She sat as they had left her, and did not move for a long while after Lawrence too had gone out.

Lawrence's mirthful humor passed very quickly. He grew full of a most delectable sense of freedom. It seemed as if a suffocating network had been tightening about his heart and, now that it had burst, the joy of the great and unexpected deliverance was more than his breast could hold. He could not breathe in-doors,—he wanted all the air he could get on the windy hills.

He had been true ; he had been true, he cried out to himself—in thought and deed he had been true ! He tried to think : he could not think nor reason. A flood that he had never acknowledged, that he had hardly suspected, that he had set all his faculties to dam up and wall over, had been suddenly let loose and overwhelmed him. He could see no law or order in the world but in one place ; to that place he must go, for light, for understanding !

> And his heart, like a bird set free,
> That tarries not early or late,
> But flies, over land, over sea,
> Straight, straight to its home, to its mate !

All the night seemed to break out and sing. All the world yearned one way ; the stars leaned out

of their courses and looked, not at him, but south ; the north wind went by him, crooning, hurrying, and the moon sailed southward past the ragged clouds. All his soul went out with them, and his body sickened to follow.

He came home and changed his dress. It was late. He lighted no lamp ; the ghostly moonlight streamed through the window, and a figure as still and ghost-like stood at the door.

" Lawrence ! Lawrence !" she called, despairingly. But he did not seem to hear. He felt no hardness toward her ; she had brought him the great deliverance as well as the grievous bondage. But he could no more heed her now than turn back if he were drawn by unbridled horses and some one cried behind. But when at last he came to go out, he almost stumbled upon her lying across the door. He stooped and picked her up ; she was as cold as stone. She clung about his neck. The tempest had come ; her ship was a wreck, the dark waves tumbling about her and dashing her with their salt spray. She clung to the strong swimmer she had flouted when winds were sweet, but was afraid she came too late.

" I could not help it ; he deserted me basely. Oh, Lawrence, do not cast me off !" she implored. " Do not go away. Pity me ; I am very miserable. I should not have done that if you had not forsaken me. No one ever helped me but you, and I have not been happy, you know I have not. I do not know what will become of me if you put me

away. I won't vex you any more; before God I will not! You have me at your mercy; will you not be merciful?"

He laid her on the bed and wrapped her up. He spoke in a deep, solemn voice:

"Be still. I cannot hear you to-night. I have been merciful. I will try to do what is right. I am going away now; wait till I come back."

He took the midnight train south. Stella was out of town. He followed her. He felt that he could not meet her before strangers with self-control, or go through formalities. He wrote a brief note at the hotel asking to see her alone. Then he shrank from the thought of meeting her with detestable things to explain, and he added:

"I should like you to know my altered position before we meet. I shrink from shocking you by a personal explanation painful to us both. Forgive me, then, for inclosing papers which will inform you."

The messenger brought back a note which showed marks of agitation:

"Please excuse me to-night. I will walk on the beach early in the morning."

As the sun came up out of the sea, and he turned away from watching the splendid vision, he saw one that affected him more. She stood a little way off, looking intently seaward; and the morning took a new grace from the flush on her cheek and the light in her clear, calm eyes. His eyes grew dim as he looked at her. If she had felt any

agitation, it was gone when she turned and waited for him to approach. She gave him her hand.

"Is it not a beautiful morning?" she said. "Don't you think it should make us very gentle and unselfish?"

The falling cadence of her voice was more musical than the waves that babbled at her feet. They walked side by side along the sands.

"Yes," he answered, "yes. If all mornings were like this——" he broke off and looked out to sea.

They came among scattered bowlders, and stood still. With diffidence she took out of his letter the paper with the printed slip attached, and gave it to him.

"You were not offended at my sending them?"

"No, I was glad you sent them. It was thoughtful of you." She spoke low and seriously. "But do I quite understand?"

She asked him several questions, modest but straightforward, with her grave eyes on his face. While he answered he was thinking, "To the pure, all things are pure."

She dropped her eyes and sighed.

"It is a dreadful story; it makes me very sad."

Then after a minute she looked up again and asked:

"What are you going to do?"

He shook with vague apprehension, and leaned sidewise on the rock.

"With her?" he asked. "I hardly know. I

thought you would advise me. You cannot think I am under obligation to keep her any longer? I am not bound to her by any law."

She did not answer for a minute or look at him. When she did, there was a strong fervor in her voice:

"We are all bound; we are all under obligation to help, to guard, to seek and to save them that are lost."

She stood before him. Her face was like the face of the angel of pity, her tones full of passionate pleading.

"Did you take her ignorantly? Have you kept her only because the law made you? I know you better. What will become of her if you cast her off? She might be worse than she is."

She turned away and shuddered. Her words pierced him the deeper because they were the same Cora had used, because they were his own smothered thoughts.

He was silent, leaning against a great rock as he stood before her, and she went on, with rising passion:

"And beware for your own sake. If you throw her off, she will draw you down with her, you and all—" she caught her breath—"all connected with you. You cannot punish her as a criminal. What could you say to justify your action? Think of the position you would stand in before the world, with your tongue tied. You could not bear it. In your heat you may think you could, but you

might as well think to resist the sea. Beware lest in your haste you throw away the good you have gained. For you have gained. Your power over her is multiplied tenfold. Your freedom is your power. She must know she is in your hands now; the fences are all down. She will know she can no longer presume; her instincts of self-preservation will weigh on your side, and your forbearance be a perpetual restraint upon her. I think you have no good alternative, and that your duty is plain. Don't think I am hard; we have all our tasks that seem too heavy at times. We can't understand; 'His ways are past finding out.'"

Her voice grew tremulous, and she held her face away a minute or two, but then looked up and smiled faintly:

"'Theirs not to make reply; theirs not to reason why.' Who knows what great things you may accomplish yet?"

All his sense went with her, down in some unseen depth; but above that rolled a stream whose waves bore him past all resistance. And now the billows swept over him and were bitter in his eyes and throat. He bent backward and rested his head upon the high rock, and stretched up his arms above him. The freshness of the morning turned to ashy pallor; the land and the sea sickened with pain.

Slowly he bent forward again:

"All that is true, I have no doubt. You have

clear eyes, and some day I may see it so myself. But I can't see, I can't hear that now. There is only one thing I can see or hear. I disowned it, I put it away, I crushed it down ; I was faithful to the galling bond ; I did my duty !"

He raised his arms again ; his voice was like a cry to heaven :

"She made my love her plaything ; she wore it out with base uses. She has used me despitefully ; she has been the curse of my life !"

And the low answer came back steadfastly :

"'Bless them that curse you ; do good to them that despitefully use you !' You say you have done your duty ; I know you have. Cleave fast to that. Take care, lest you have not that to say by and by."

Her voice faltered ; there was a look of repressed tears about her drooped eyes. She had plainly been over the first part of this path before, but she was getting on untrodden ground.

"Duty is the principal thing ; there is always some sweetness sooner or later with that ; but without it, the best things will turn to ashes and dust."

"I know, I know," he cried. "But I can't feel that now. I can only feel one thing ; I can only care for one thing. I only know that there is but one person in all the world for me, and that duty, and reason, and heaven itself, mean nothing beside her. And it is like death to hear her say these things to me, and to know that she could not say them if she cared for me as I do for her."

He thought her as steady as the rocks, and to her the solid earth seemed to heave round her more than the unstable sea. But she steadied herself and replied :

"Ought you not to be glad if it is not so? It would not alter your duty. Would it not make it the harder for you? Would it not make your way darker than it is?"

"Glad!" he called out, despairingly. "Glad that the sun is put out in the sky ; that the earth is a desert and my heart an intolerable pang; that there is no more purpose, or spring, or desire in my life! Oh, yes, I am glad, glad! You can't know what you say!"

She clasped her hands ; she laid her shoulder and face against the rock ; she spoke bitterly :

"Oh, do not try me so. Do you suppose there is nothing hard for me also? Yes, I know ; I know!"

He bent toward her, but a horrible doubt seized him. He clasped his hands behind his head ; he swung from side to side.

"For another? Not for me?" he demanded, hoarsely.

She stood unsteadily ; she lifted her joined hands ; her upturned face was aflame, but she could not speak. Then her self-repression broke down. She sank upon the rock and covered her face, and wept uncontrollably. He threw himself beside her.

"Oh, is it true?" he besought her. "Can it be true?"

"Yes!—yes!" she cried, sobbing vehemently. "I tried to keep it down; I would not hear it. I tried to do right. But I can't help it now."

He turned his face up to the sky and groaned. "O God!" It was as if heaven came within his reach, and resistless hands stretched out and held him back. But it was too much. Fierce joy rushed upon him and swept away everything else. He stretched out his arms; he bowed over her; he caught her and held her fast. The sun leaped up in the sky. The waves and the winds sang together. There was a new heaven and a new earth! "O Stella!" was all he said.

She lay still; she had no strength. But soon she found faint voice:

"O Lawrence, I am so weak! You must help me to do right."

"Help you!" he cried, piteously. "Help the angels of light! O Stella, Stella! Don't trust in me. I have no goodness but yours, no right but you. I had rather the tide would rise over us here, than have to go away from you."

She sobbed, then turned her head with a long, long breath, and slowly, steadily, with weak, limp fingers began to loosen his clasp and raise herself up. He let her go. The world seemed slipping from him; the shadows of night fell about him. They sat side by side and looked at each other.

"Is there no way?" he asked.

"No,—no way but one."

She tried to stanch her tears, but they would flow.

"Don't cry, don't cry!" he besought. "I can't bear that."

"Oh, never mind," she replied. "It's a relief to cry; I am not altogether unhappy. It is very bitter at first, and chokes me."

She bowed her face a moment, then lifted it and went on, with the tears in her eyes and voice:

"No; there is only one way. Even if it were easier, I could not thrust her out, I should hate myself if I did; you yourself would despise me. If we could enter heaven by shutting the door upon her, could we be happy walking together in the golden streets? Would not the thought of her wandering in outer darkness come in and torment us and make us afraid? I do not grudge her,—at least, at least——" Her voice faltered, but rose again. "I ought not. I do pity her with all my heart. If I should take away the only good she has, would it not turn to my curse?"

They had risen and stood on the sand. His eyes were bent upon her; her words played on him like the winds on a harp.

"Do right; do right?" he exclaimed. "Whatever you do or say is right to me."

Her head dropped. She lifted her hands; she spoke brokenly.

"Do not speak so; help me; I am weak too."

He caught her hands.

"Forgive me,—I will, I will, I know I could die for you. Can I not live and endure for your sake? Look up! look up."

She looked up and smiled through tears. He held her hands fast, she stepped upon the low rock and stood upon his level.

"Why should we mourn?" she cried. "Have we not the best things?"

Her eyes turned from him and looked out across the sea. And her thoughts went on beyond sea, and land, and sun. But he could only look at her.

And presently her eyes came back to his. They looked in each other's faces long, but did not speak.

Then slowly, slowly and bitterly they drew their eyes away and set their unwilling faces toward the north; and lingering, step by step, they came side by side along the sands again, parted, and went their allotted, divided ways.

THE IMAGE OF SAN DONATO.

By Virginia W. Johnson.

I.

"Buy the respect of the insolent."—*Turkish Proverb.*

DOWN in the old Trastevere quarter of Rome the festa of St. Cecilia was being celebrated in her church and convent.

The day was in harmony with the memory of the noble Roman lady—a sky serenely blue, sunshine on fountain and temple ruin, the atmosphere golden with autumn's richness of coloring. The adjacent narrow streets were deserted, swept by one of those waves of popular impulse so characteristic of Italian cities; files of priestly students from the colleges passed through the gateway, this band clad in black, that one in scarlet or purple, and formed lines of wavering color in their transi-

*** *Harper's Magazine*, *January*, 1879.

tion across the court to the shadowy portico, flanked by the high, grim, convent wall—that modern reading of St. Cecilia's martyrdom. High above the surging crowd of devotees and beggars the campanile soared into the sunny air, outlined against that azure Roman sky, and sent forth its tinkling peal of summons to vespers, like the silvery intonation of a benediction.

Two strangers entered the gate, the elder sombre and quiet, the younger eager and delighted by the spectacle. Their respective positions were apparent at a glance. Mademoiselle Durand, in her neat black dress, with her thin sallow face and repressed expression, was a French governess; the young American girl beside her, richly attired in blue velvet, was her charge.

"I am a Cecilia, although far from a saint," said the latter, gayly. "Ah! how one loves to hear about her—the beautiful martyr of Raphael's pictures! Do you believe she is now singing among the heavenly choirs up there, mademoiselle?" She paused a moment to gaze at the sky, the sun-bathed campanile, with a wistfulness not unfamiliar to her companion, and which she attributed to an imaginative childhood. "Perhaps the evening bells of Rome are the echoes of her voice in another world," she added, musingly.

"Come," said mademoiselle, dryly.

"When I am grown up perhaps I will build a convent of St. Cecilia in America with my own money," continued the girl, meditatively.

Mademoiselle's eyes sparkled ; she caressed the hand within her arm.

"Chère enfant! But I forget ; it is not your faith."

"My faith? I always go to mass with you ; I am not only devout, je suis bigote," rejoined her pupil.

Then they entered the church. St. Cecilia's statue, wrought in purest marble, lay revealed beneath the altar on this one day of the year, when her crypt in the catacomb also blooms with flowers. Transfigured by the radiance of silver lamps and myriads of tapers, enshrined in garlands of roses, veiled in clouds of incense, the statue in its niche lent a charm to the gaudy ornaments of the high altar, and all the tinsel draperies extending from column to column along the aisle. On the right a star of light was visible in the miraculous bath-room, with its dim frescoes and ancient pillars ; the nuns flitted behind the lattice of their gallery.

Mademoiselle, a devout Catholic, knelt at different shrines. Her pupil also knelt. The music, the chant, the glow of those gilded and crimson draperies overhead, seen through the wreaths of incense, all blended. She closed her eyes. She also must pray. For what boon? She smiled suddenly as she murmured :

"O God, please send my papa to Rome for Christmas-day."

Then she rose to her feet, threaded her way

among the ranks of kneeling students, and mademoiselle found her in the court thrusting money into the hands of a group of little boys, the true Trasteverini, with large, liquid eyes.

"We shall be late, I fear," admonished the governess, as they finally quitted the church.

The young girl, Cecilia Denvil, had insisted on walking to this particular sanctuary in the Trastevere quarter instead of on the Pincian Hill. She was both winning and perverse.

At an angle of the crooked streets the window of a shop attracted her attention. Instantly the shrine of St. Cecilia, with its flowers and silver lamps, vanished from her mind. The shop was a mere niche in an old palace wall, brimming over, as it were, into the street, with such odds and ends as a bit of tapestry, a dark picture, a heap of ancient books, a tray of coins and medals, an idol fashioned by Chinese skill.

"What is it?" cried Cecilia.

"Only an image," replied mademoiselle.

The object of Cecilia's interest was a figure on a bracket in the shop window. She darted into the shop, her governess following with a patient smile. What harm could result from her pupil's chatting with the old shop-keeper clad in shabby black, with a rusty satin stock about his neck, and a face tinged yellow by age, as were those of the dilapidated marble busts ranged above his head in the obscurity of the shop? Ay, what harm indeed, mademoiselle? If one could read futurity!

The old man, without surprise at the advent of a young girl in blue velvet, took down the image, and explained to her its history in his slow, musical, Roman tongue. Even mademoiselle lent an ear of unwilling fascination to the tale. The little wooden figure, a foot in height, was San Donato. Behold, signorina mia, the beauty of the face, the robes tinted a soft rose, with ample gold margin, the aureole and palm of martyrdom in the hand. In the great Demidoff villa of San Donato a patron saint was placed in a niche above the portal of certain suites of apartments, as guardian spirit, by the builder. That brought good luck. The Russian prince is dead, signorina, and the nephew heir cast out the saints with quantities of other valuables for sale. For this reason poor San Donato, patron of the whole place, is now perched on a shelf in a little shop at Rome.

Cecilia listened with sparkling eyes, and her head a trifle on one side.

"San Donato shall be my saint," she cried, extending her hands. "Two hundred francs? I have more in my purse. You need not frown, mademoiselle; it is my pocket-money from my papa in America, to spend as I choose. Good-by, signor; I will come to see you again some time."

The old shopkeeper looked after her a moment, then drew from under a chair a repast of dry bread and an onion, interrupted by the purchaser.

"After all, San Donato might have brought me luck had I kept him longer," he muttered, drain-

ing the little flask of wine as he sat on the door-step, and musing with that curious mixture of avarice and regret at losing a treasure peculiar to the connoisseur.

San Donato was carried along the street by his happy possessor somewhat in the fashion of a new doll. Mademoiselle hid his light under a bushel by laying a fold of shawl over his head and aureole. Cecilia's fancy was captivated by his history even more than by his pensive face and gorgeous robes. San Donato, deposed from his lofty estate in the palace of a Russian prince, should preside as guardian spirit of her home. The image was invested with the gifts of the good fairy as much as he embodied any religious symbol. *His mission was to avert evil.* The saint passed to a new shrine without attendant priests, acolytes, and banners, the swinging of censers, the tinkling of bells, as in the fine old days before Rome was a modern European capital. It was not even borne aloft on sailors' shoulders, like the silver statue of Our Lady at Marseilles, or the miracle-working black Madonna of Montenero at Leghorn. Instead, San Donato moved under the arm of a young girl, muffled in a shawl, skirting the bridge, the quay, the square, now in sunshine, now in shadow, and finally gained the Piazza di SS. Apostoli. Here he was conducted across a court adorned with mouldy statues, and vanished up a broad stairway.

On the third story of the palazzo, shorn of its former papal glories, and yet not degenerated to

shabbiness, a door bore the card of Mrs. Henry Denvil. Governess and pupil entered this apartment, and each sought her respective chamber. Cecilia tossed aside her hat, placed the image on the table, and, resting her chin on her hand, gazed at it steadfastly. San Donato, with his aureole glistening, and holding his palm branch, seemed to return her scrutiny mildly—even to interpret her thought. She had never possessed a confidante other than a company of dolls, now banished as too juvenile companions. "Do you see how it will be?" she said aloud to the image. "You shall be placed in the salon, and look down on us all. Nobody will ever banish you again to a dirty little shop. Perhaps my papa will come over for Christmas. Do not tell—I begged him to come in my last letter after mademoiselle had corrected. I do not spell very well in English, you know, while Jack has forgotten it altogether, mamma says. Jack is at school in Switzerland, and I have not seen him for two years. He is my brother."

She took up her saint again, and went along the corridor. Her head was erect, and a soft smile played about her mouth. She peeped into the salon, drew back, reflected a moment, and entered. This salon possessed the charm for her of forbidden ground. She was rigidly banished from it by her mother, who received here much company. Hence the delight of seeking some niche up high, where San Donato could be placed. Possibly a gay lady would peer at him through her lorgnette,

and inquire, "Pray, my dear Mrs. Denvil, where did you get that little statue?"

Mamma would seek *her* lorgnette, and reply: "A little statue? I rent the apartment, furnished, of Monsignor N——. The count may know."

Clearly, San Donato deserved a place of honor, and the salon alone was sufficiently good for him. Cecilia traversed the room slowly, seeking a shrine. The place was dark and silent; draperies of sombre damask shrouded the windows and doorways; chandeliers of Venetian glass swayed down from the vaulted ceiling like garlands of pale, frozen flowers; the floor was of polished, inlaid woods; the bronze and green tints of the wall were relieved by gilded cornices and columns bearing the shield of the count's ancestors. All was stately, impressive, if a trifle tarnished; and the effect of patrician elegance, everywhere apparent, was heightened by an occasional portrait—a Martellini in cavalier hat, with an angel bearing heavenward the family emblem, a hammer; a Martellini as a nun, with long, pale fingers clasped over a rosary.

Cecilia had not completed her survey when she was startled by the tinkle of a bell and the approach of visitors. One glance assured her that egress by means of the door was cut off. She darted behind a sofa in the corner beside the window. Here she crouched on the floor, holding San Donato in her arms, and laughed silently. She did not fear to confront these guests. Who then? She

dreaded the flash of her own mother's eye. Yes, indeed, her pretty mamma had ceased to love her, banished her more and more from her presence, made sharp or dry responses to her prattle. Cecilia sighed inaudibly as she crouched there. Hark! The visitors approached the window; she could touch one by extending her arm from her hiding-place. Who were they? Oh, some of her mamma's gentlemen friends lounging in for an afternoon call. They spoke in a low, rapid tone, and their conversation only reached her because of her propinquity.

Birds of prey sometimes pass over the blooming valleys, the waving grain sown with wild flowers, the dove-cote beneath the cottage eaves, uttering their harsh, discordant cries while on the wing.

The English voice, hoarse and deep: "It promises to be a slow season—awfully dull. No English coming out this year, I hear. Have you recently made the acquaintance of—la belle Américaine?"

The French voice, clear and crisp in utterance: "Yes, last week, at the Spanish Embassy. She is really chic, mon ami."

The English voice: "Her dinners are not at all bad. Lots of money, you know, and the count manages the whole establishment, from renting her the apartment of his uncle the Monsignor N—— to selecting the governess of the daughter and the *chef*. Ha! ha! ha!"

The French voice: "Ah, the Count Martellini!

And monsieur the husband is at home in America making the money, I suppose. Mon Dieu! how those men over yonder trust their wives! A charming arrangement for the count."

The English voice: "Have you heard the latest rumor? They are actually going off together to the Nile after Christmas. A party is proposed, and that sort of thing, but every one knows that it will result in a dahabéeh to the cataract. Vive l'amour!"

The French voice, changing to a louder key: "Ah, madame is looking so charming to-day!"

Then a soft rustling of silken draperies over the polished floor announced the entrance of Mrs. Denvil, amiable greetings were exchanged, and the gentlemen became deferential and courteous in manner. Buy the respect of the insolent, by all means!

All the same, two birds of prey had wheeled in heavy and sluggish flight over the valley where the grain ripened and the poppies bloomed, uttering their discordant, mocking cry.

Cecilia crouched behind the sofa, bewildered and astonished. What did they mean? She grew hot and cold, her heart throbbed violently, she clinched her little hand. Why had these wicked creatures come here to sing their dreary duet? How their tone changed when the hostess appeared! She experienced the swift, intense indignation of youth at hypocrisy, ignorant that these voices would sound the same notes in every house

to which they gained admission, after the manner of society. Instinct taught her they alluded to her own mother, before the allusion to the Nile voyage, of which she had already heard. Her mamma and the count were going, with some friends, up the Nile after Christmas. Why might not she go also? Her lips quivered resentfully. Only that morning she had found the count in the aviary, petting the birds; she had wound her arms about his neck, and said, "Oh, how beautiful you are! When I have grown as tall and handsome as a woman can be I shall marry you."

The count had showered kisses on her fair hair, and pinched her cheek in his caressing way.

"We need not wait long, carina," he had replied.

Then mamma had appeared on the threshold, a bright spot on each cheek, and that new flash in her eye.

"You are too old for such nonsense, Cecilia. Go back to mademoiselle directly," she had said, in her dry tones.

Cecilia had departed, crest-fallen, mortified, with some vague remembrance of a father who had not thus dismissed her. To be sure, the count had sent her, later in the day, a gift of bonbons as atonement for mamma's snubbing—one of those white satin boots, mounted on a gilded rink skate, from Spillman's, in the Via Condotti. *He* was never cross, only a big playfellow, all amiability, little clever tricks, frolic, easily tyrannized over,

and serenely content to spin balls or sift cards all day long for a child's amusement. They had known him two or three years ; he was their oldest friend abroad ; he came and went at all hours. The count was a great gentleman, too, of princely lineage, easy, graceful, and elegant. How kind he was to interest himself in the Denvils, when they were strangers in a foreign land! The young girl had ample leisure for these reflections in her hiding-place. She whispered to the image, demanding what it thought of these croakers. The world was so beautiful, and people so kind. Then the two visitors were replaced by a bevy of ladies, and amid the rustlings of more silken draperies on the floor and the taps of heeled shoes, Cecilia heard her mother exclaim :

"What a horrid man ! I am always relieved when he departs, and yet one meets him everywhere. He told me that frightful scandal about Lady B—— (and no doubt it is true, unfortunately) as if he enjoyed the recital."

A moment before Mrs. Denvil had said :

"Going so soon, Major Kettledrum ? I am always delighted to see you."

Now the sofa creaked beneath the weight of two dowagers.

"How soon they lose their republican simplicity over here !" said one, sipping a cup of tea.

"Oh, and they say the husband in America would not be presentable—a common sort of man ; a carpenter, I believe," retorted the other.

"Hush! A little more sugar, dear Mrs. Denvil. Thanks."

Finally the rustling of dresses and murmur of voices ceased; Cecilia crept out of her retreat unperceived. She no longer sought a niche for San Donato in the salon. It seemed to her that the statue did not belong there. Mademoiselle had a headache; Cecilia ate her supper alone. Heaven had given her the precious gift of a thoughtful consideration for others. She took her own cologne flask to mademoiselle's room and bathed the sufferer's temples.

"Mademoiselle, did St. Cecilia despise the world?"

"Surely. She was a holy woman."

"Are there any living like her now?"

"God knows," said mademoiselle, with a little bitterness.

Cecilia kissed her governess, and closed the door softly. Her mood was a strange one. She no longer feared her mother. Something had escaped from her nature, as if she had been touched by fire. It was that subtle, perishable essence of being—childhood.

"I will play that I am a ghost, and walk through all the rooms," she said to herself.

Mrs. Denvil found her standing in her dressing-room, calmly regarding her, as she made her toilet for a ball at the Quirinal Palace.

"Why are you not in bed? It is ten o'clock," she said.

Cecilia made no reply. She was gazing at the picture reflected in the cheval-glass of a very pretty woman in cream-tinted satin robe scarcely retained on her dimpled shoulders by a strap, diamonds and pearls twinkling about her throat and in her hair. The face of the mother, round, soft, with small weak chin and bright eyes, appeared more youthful than that of her child at the moment. The dressing-room was littered with a rainbow of colors, wraps, dresses, cashmere, laces, and jewelry. It smelled of mingled perfumes and singed hair. Beauty, the poodle, lay coiled up in a tiny white ball on a velvet cushion. How fashionable had Mrs. Denvil become! She never drove out or received company without Beauty tucked under her left arm. At length the daughter inquired, in an odd, abrupt way: "Is it very delightful to attend so many balls?"

Mrs. Denvil laughed nervously and adjusted a bracelet.

"I attend very few balls, my dear. You will like the dancing, I dare say, when you come out as a young lady." Her tone was propitiatory, even deprecating.

Cecilia did not smile.

"Why does not papa live here with us?" she pursued, steadily, after a pause.

Mrs. Denvil was a weak woman; she moved uneasily, then took refuge in maternal dignity.

"I am in Europe to educate Jack and yourself. Papa and I make the sacrifice of being separated for

your good, and that you may acquire the foreign languages," she explained, in an injured tone.

Cecilia's eyebrows contracted.

"Are there no good schools or governesses, then, in America?"

"Go to bed, you impertinent child!" said Mrs. Denvil, sharply.

She was ruffled, embarrassed, strangely disturbed, by the curious scrutiny of her daughter. She would have kissed her but for that last question. Really it was too much to be asked if there were no schools in America! She gave Cecilia a little tap with her fan, and floated away, a lovely vision of glistening satin and jewels, enveloped in an opera cloak, to be presented to the Princess Margherita.

The self-elected ghost was free to roam through the whole apartment, to shed a few tears, and finally return to the small chamber containing San Donato. She had intended to tell her mother about the image, but the confidence had remained frozen on her lips. She did not go to bed. She was lonely, miserable, and disquieted. What would her mother have said if she knew of the hiding behind the sofa in the salon? Cecilia now rested her arms on the table, and gazed at the little wooden figure. Never had any toy possessed equal interest to her.

Suddenly a great light filled the room, and San Donato vanished. She searched for the lost treasure in dismay, and beheld him enter the door. O, great and glorious San Donato! O, serene and

holy San Donato! spurning the guise of the old shop, a thing of wood, and appearing to a lonely, neglected child as a swift, strong angel, with unfolded wings, in all thy wondrous celestial beauty! Cecilia fell on her knees, not daring to lift her eyes to the golden pinions, the head crowned with its aureole of martyrdom; but the glorious shape raised her, the door and walls of her chamber vanished, and with a giddy rush through the dark night, which deprived her of breath, she found herself standing on a globe, a world, upheld by her guardian, as the soul stands in Guido Reni's picture of the Capitol. Her raiment was also white and glistening; great pearls clasped her throat and wrists. She was gravely chidden for touching these in wonder, and then she saw other shapes, resembling San Donato, passing rank behind rank in the clouds.

"These through great affliction came, but they never swerved from duty. Are you afraid?" His voice was like the chimes up in St. Cecilia's campanile ringing for vespers.

"Duty? What does it mean?" cried Cecilia, opening her eyes.

The image stood on the table, and the candle was flaring low in the socket. Her arms were stiff, her body cold—hours must have elapsed. She shivered, a sob burst from her throat, and she sought her bed. Mrs. Denvil returned from her ball at that moment. The dressing-room had been restored to order by the sleepy maid. The lady

drew a slip of perfumed note-paper from her glove. Her eyes were very bright, her lips parched. The note implored her, in the most flowery Italian, to consent to the Nile voyage, as the Countess di Moccoli would also go in that case. Mrs. Denvil laughed her carefully acquired little laugh of studied indifference, and glanced at herself in the mirror. She was not too old to be admired, although her daughter was fifteen. The dream of Alfredo, Count Martellini, was to make a Nile voyage in her company. People would talk, of course. People always talk scandal about somebody. The pretty woman, with her insatiable vanity, was already drifting on a rapid current from which there was no escape. Well, she was not alone. All the gay ladies and men of her acquaintance were also afloat on the same perilous stream. By and by they would reach the Niagara brink ; then, with a dash and a plunge, all would be over. The end ? They would have lived, drained the goblet, and flung it away. When it is fashionable to exaggerate sentiment in every phase, women of Mrs. Denvil's type, fond of luxury and extravagance, intoxicated with dissipation in foreign cities, do not place themselves in the rear ranks.

She tore the note into bits, and smiled again in the mirror. A pale light passed over the glass surface, blue and ghostly ; the reflected face grew haggard ; patches of rouge stood out on the cheeks ; dark shadows gathered beneath the eyes ; even the careful coiffure was dishevelled ; a stain

of wine was visible on the satin gown ; powder became glaringly apparent on the dimpled shoulder. The enemy was dawn of a day destined to mark the crisis in Augusta Denvil's life. She shrank from it, without knowing why, and drew the heavy curtains.

Five o'clock on the Pincian Hill, with the setting sun casting its ruddy rays over the city spires and roofs. The band was playing, the carriages wending slowly up the drive, the children darting about the flower beds, where the fountain sparkled. Mrs. Denvil's maroon liveries and spirited horses had already made the circuit, the lady in pale turquoise blue betraying none of the fatigue of dawn, and receiving complacently that homage of admiration which Italy never fails to bestow on an attractive woman in a fine equipage. The Countess di Moccoli had left her own phaeton for a seat beside Mrs. Denvil—an attention the most gratifying in public—to discuss the Nile voyage. Also the Count Martellini, in faultless attire, a jasmine blossom in his button-hole, and yellow gloves, having assisted at this exchange, had consented to take a seat opposite the two ladies. He seldom drove with Mrs. Denvil. The count punctiliously observed appearances. He did not dislike the circulation of a rumor which elected him as the devoted cavalier of the rich American lady—a position which kept other men at a distance.

Cecilia darted forward from a sheltered path and laid her hand on the carriage door. Her look was

troubled and perplexed. Suspicion had taken no positive form in her mind ; she was merely striving to read San Donato's message, which had haunted her memory all day : " These through great affliction came, but they never swerved from duty. Are you afraid ?"

" Mamma, come home with me !" she cried, clinging to the door.

" You here, Cecilia !" the mother exclaimed.

" Yes ; come home," she reiterated.

" You must sit beside me and take a drive instead," interposed the count, quick to avert a scene.

" No ; do not touch *me*," said Cecilia, her large eyes flashing.

" Jealousy," thought the Countess di Moccoli.

Mrs. Denvil shook her finger playfully at the intruder, and resumed her conversation. She supposed mademoiselle was back among the trees. Mademoiselle was at home ; Cecilia had run away from her to follow her mamma. This was the girl's reading of San Donato's message. She drew back, hurt and offended. She had failed. The slight childish form crossed to the parapet, and stood there, looking down on the Piazza del Popolo, where the pedestrians were dwarfed to pigmies. She thought of her absent father, who represented ever an earthly providence to her, by reason of mademoiselle's admonition, the supply of pin-money, and the letters she wrote under dictation. She idealized this distant yet benign influence.

Behind her the crowd increased, the music rose and fell, the carriages moved rapidly past each other in a maze of wheels. On the horizon the red ball of a sun dipped, shedding a tremulous rosy mist over St. Peter's dome.

Cecilia turned, saw her mother's landau again approaching, yielded to a childish impulse, and ran toward it, repenting of her rudeness to the count. He had always been so gentle, so tender with her, from the first. Her eyes were fixed on the maroon liveries; she strove to attract the count's notice, approached the brink of gliding vehicles, then her foot slipped on the freshly sprinkled gravel; she fell, and the carriage passed over her.

A little heap lay in the road; other horses were reined in furiously, not to trample on it as well. The American lady had run over her own child. That blood-curdling shriek of horror! that jolt on a soft yielding substance was the passage of her wheels on her flesh, the additional weight of stout Countess di Moccoli and of Count Martellini aiding, if possible, in crushing out a fragile existence.

Later the count was confronted by a white stricken woman. He was full of sympathy and pity for his playmate; tears stood in his beautiful eyes.

"Leave us alone!" she said, fiercely, even wildly.

The count shrugged his shoulders, frowned, and departed. Palpable injustice in the capricious creature woman. He was a philosopher, and ap-

peared at a diplomatic reception that evening. Matters might have been worse. As a sentimentalist he had made as much love as he dared to a pretty married woman whose husband was absent, while she was manifestly flattered by his attentions. Practically speaking, he as an impoverished noble had reaped advantage from his place as habitué of the circle of a rich American in a land where a nice percentage exists on custom. He had directed the money of Henry Denvil into those channels of expenditure which would benefit himself by skilful advice. The Nile voyage would set the world wholly at defiance.

Stout, good-natured Countess di Moccoli also appeared at the diplomatic reception that evening, and we may rest assured no mention was made of a young girl having been run over at the Pincio in the gilded salons where both moved. One does not mention illness and death in gilded salons, amid the ripple of music and laughter. One frequents these resorts to forget, if possible, such grim and ghastly realities.

Thus closed the 23d of November, 18—.

II.

"The house rests not on the earth, but on the wife."—*Servian Proverb.*

Mr. Henry Denvil arose at ten o'clock on the morning of the 24th of November. His head ached ;

his recollections of the previous evening were confused, further than a conviction that he had partaken of a champagne supper at the hotel, and played cards for money afterward with Jacques Robin and his wife. A man must occupy his evenings in some way.

The habits of earlier life were still sufficiently strong to render him ashamed of having slept until ten o'clock. He drank his coffee hastily, pressed his slouch hat down over his brow, and did not glance at the hotel as he walked along the village street to the foundry. Eyes were watching him from a window of that same hotel, however—keen eyes, given to studying the world for their own ends, and which now observed the figure and gait of Henry Denvil as he passed with a certain speculative interest. These eyes belonged to a woman, plain, no longer young, her sole attractions a soft voice and pleasing manner; and a small, meagre man, wiry as a grasshopper, with gray hair, a yellow skin, large nose, and a peevish mouth. In the faces of both husband and wife was a hungry, pinched look. Years of poverty sometimes sets such a seal on the human countenance.

This couple were Monsieur Jacques Robin and his wife, emigrants from Heaven knows what past life in their native land, and now dwelling drearily, it must be confessed, in the one tavern of Foundryville—a mere hamlet back among the mountains of Pennsylvania. A year previously Monsieur Robin had applied for the post of clerk

in the foundry, and obtaining the modest situation, madame had subsequently appeared on the scene. If existence had been dull for Mrs. Denvil up here among the hills, how much more so was it likely to prove for a woman of Madame Robin's abilities! She took to studying Henry Denvil, and her sky cleared. She knew every particular of his history and family before he even saw her. When he did observe her, Madame Robin made no impression on him beyond being genteel and modest in appearance. Wait! A foreigner soured by poverty, endowed by nature with artfulness, knowledge of humanity in its baser aspects, a certain feline patience, may achieve much in a hamlet among the hills.

On this morning Monsieur Robin had run up from the foundry with a letter for his wife. She read it eagerly.

"It is as I thought!" she exclaimed. "Gustave was always clever at discovery. He has managed to communicate with Mrs. Denvil's own maid at Rome, and learned enough. She will always make excuse to live in Europe, the people flatter her, and she is already much talked about as having fallen in love with the Roman Count Martellini."

"Well?" said the husband, doubtfully, irritably.

"I tell you I have them *all* here in the palm of my hand," retorted madame, with kindling excitement. "In another year I shall be installed as

housekeeper in the proprietor's house. You will not only amuse him with cards in the evening, but gain his confidence. Chut! There are secrets to be sold in business to rival houses if necessary. He is a stupid man, without intimate friends, and wholly unsuspicious. He is no match for us. If madame deserts her home for Paris and Rome, ma foi! it is *our* opportunity."

The speaker's dark face flushed, and her eyes glittered. Monsieur Robin returned to the foundry with his figure rather more erect than usual. Feminine enthusiasm is frequently contagious.

In the mean while Henry Denvil had reached his place of business. The European mail also brought him a letter from his wife, inclosing another from his little Cecilia. In this home correspondence Mrs. Denvil always dwelt on the development of her children. Was she not living abroad to educate them? Was she not wintering in Rome to benefit Cecilia's delicate throat? For this end she required more and more money.

Mr. Denvil read his daughter's note first, and smiled at the request that he should come to Rome for Christmas-day. Then he leaned his head on his hand, and tapped his desk with his penknife, absently. How the years slipped away! What had he to anticipate in the clouded future? Would these children, now receiving a foreign education, ever return contentedly to live at Foundryville? Well, they were Augusta's children, and she was an ambitious mother. He made no complaint at

the prolonged absence of his family ; he was used to it. He never failed to send the required remittances. "The money belongs to Augusta," he always said to himself. Besides, his own expenses were small. One by one the rooms of his large house had been closed through disuse, and a half-grown boy waited on him in the wing. Dust had settled on the rich furniture ordered years ago with such pride to make a fitting nest for his bride ; rust gnawed the mute strings of his daughter's piano ; the conservatory had been abandoned ; the garden was neglected. Henry Denvil had never been an epicure ; now he lived from hand to mouth.

Seventeen years before, he had arrived at Foundryville, a man of forty, who had worked hard for the money he was prepared to invest in the foundry. The death of the previous owner compelled his widow to sell out at a sacrifice. Henry Denvil made a good bargain, instituted energetic reforms in the works, lived altogether at Foundryville, gained the confidence of his miners and "hands" by being one of them, and prospered. His predecessor's widow adjusted the exchange of property in the presence of her daughter Augusta, a beautiful girl of eighteen. Plain Henry Denvil, accustomed to toil-worn women in calico gowns, was dazzled by the graceful manners, white hands, and elegance of these two fashionable ladies. He fell in love for the first time, was encouraged to pay his addresses, married Augusta, and built the large house at Foundryville. His wife was

above him in birth, education, and social position; his mother-in-law, during her lifetime, never permitted him to forget this circumstance.

Augusta accepted his devotion at first very sweetly, as a matter of course, then a little wearily. The climate of Foundryville gave her neuralgia. She spent whole winters at Washington and in Florida. He could not leave his business for a day without anxiety. The master's hand must never relax its hold of the helm. He was a proud husband and father; his own nature, sound to the core, accepted without thought of self-sacrifice the enjoyment of his wife in travel. He knew nothing of society, or of the world in which she lived at present. That he placed his family in the peril of evil association in Europe, without himself there as the natural protector, had not once occurred to his mind. Like all men who have earned their own fortune, his first aim had been to bestow on his son and daughter those advantages of study in which his own youth had been deficient. Hence his acquiescence in the plan of sending Jack to Switzerland and Cecilia to Paris, Dresden, or Rome. Mrs. Denvil's arguments in favor of this arrangement had prevailed. Would not the children have been sent away from Foundryville in any case?

The foundry absorbed his day as the great furnace devoured its fuel. As for his evenings? He was not a reading man; his home was silent and dull. He had acquired the habit of dropping in at the tavern and playing cards with his clerk, M.

Jacques Robin. He learned many new games, écarté, baccarat, rouge et noir, among the number. The diversion amused him. Often he found himself speculating as to a mistake made the previous evening in the midst of daily business, or a different plan of playing a winning card the ensuing night.

When the hearthstone is cold, a man seeks forgetfulness elsewhere.

The character of Henry Denvil was on the verge of rapid deterioration. He failed to perceive it. He was puzzled to account for having lost so much money in so short a space of time. That was all. Instinct was at work in the little community, the foundry, where swarthy creatures with bared arms flitted like demons about the great furnace, moulding the fused metal into shapes. These found leisure to curse the "sneaking Frenchman" at the hotel; but the imprecations were gathered up in the whirl and clash of machinery, the din of bells, the hoarse shouting of many voices, and went no further. Outside, the hills towered high above the little hamlet, and the river foamed along the valley. The world was very remote.

"Come to Rome for Christmas," mused Henry Denvil, still resting his head on his hand, and idly scrawling figures on the back of the letter with a pencil.

The request stung him to the quick. He was not needed to complete the happiness of a Roman Christmas. Was not Madame Robin always *so* interested to hear about Cecilia? This poor mother

had once possessed such a daughter. From these conversations invariably resulted doubt, cynicism, depression. Would his family dwell in peace at dull Foundryville? Alas! no. The coming years were as blank in prospect as was the present in reality, under the subtle suggestions of Madame Robin's sympathy.

M. Jacques Robin quitted his desk in the corner of the office and approached on tip-toe. Henry Denvil had drawn a card, the ace of diamonds, on the back of his daughter's letter. M. Robin smirked.

"If you are disengaged at eight o'clock, I should like to show you another game," he said, in a discreet and respectful tone.

"Yes," assented the master, moodily.

The November night settled gloomily on Foundryville. Mist swathed the hill-tops and rolled along the slopes, the rain fell monotonously, and the river, invisible in the darkness, mingled its melancholy music with the fitful soughing of the wind. Lights gleamed in the windows of the houses; occasionally a great glare illuminated the whole village; the withered foliage glowed in the shaft of crimson fire; far below, the water twinkled and rippled as if reflecting a conflagration: it was the hour of casting at the foundry, when the chimney belched its volumes of smoke, and the molten iron poured forth in rivulets, like a lava torrent, in the black void of the vast building.

Up in the master's home a single feeble ray was

visible in the inhabited wing. Henry Denvil had fallen asleep in his chair. He awoke, looked at his watch, and rose. Eight o'clock. He caught a glimpse of his own face in the glass ; it was pale and worn. He resumed his chair. The clock ticked in-doors ; the rain fell steadily out-of-doors. The lamp had been so placed that its rays fell on a portrait opposite his chair. This portrait represented his daughter Cecilia at the age of ten—a charming blonde head, skilfully treated by the artist, and the large eyes were turned full upon him with a frank intelligence. Henry Denvil was not of an imaginative temperament ; his prime had been too fully occupied for idle reveries ; but now solitude was rendering him sensitive to morbid influences. When he awoke he became vividly, intensely conscious of the gaze of this picture fixed on himself. He sat motionless, and studied it, instead of going out. Nine o'clock. A tap at the door, and M. Jacques Robin stood on the threshold, deferential in manner, wet as to garments, having awaited his guest for an hour. Henry Denvil laughed loudly, almost roughly, seized his hat, and sought the village tavern.

The play was reckless that night. The visitor was in the mood for high stakes. Monsieur Robin lost and won without the quiver of an eyelash or a change of hue in the dull opacity of his complexion. Henry Denvil lost and won with the veins growing knotted and prominent in forehead and temple, and his color deepening from red to crim-

son. Madame Robin, cool and quiet, crocheted little threads of silk together into a golden mesh with a sharp and slender needle, and from time to time served the gentlemen with wine.

Eleven o'clock. Some person tapped Henry Denvil on the shoulder. He glanced up impatiently, with bloodshot eyes. The landlord of the tavern gave him a telegram, while the official who had brought it waited at the door. He read :

"Come to us immediately. Cecilia has been run over. Tell me what to do.—AUGUSTA DENVIL."

Then he was standing outside in the dark night, the rain, chill and dreary as destiny, beating on his bare head, while the clouds rolled low, and the river sent up its murmur from the valley below. His little girl would be dead, he felt convinced, before he could reach her.

III.

"The nest of the blind bird is made by God."—*Armenian Proverb.*

Christmas-day at Rome, as cold and crisp as any Northern festival, with a piercing Tramontane wind sweeping across the piazza, the Alban Hills snow-crested, as if cut in alabaster, and the fountains fringed with icicles.

A gay and brilliant Christmas for a holiday world, with roses blooming still in sheltered nooks ; a devout Christmas for those prepared to read its beautiful meaning in ancient churches, each of which had found a voice in full choral harmonies on this day ; a Christmas of silent and devout thankfulness for those escaped the shadow of death.

Cecilia Denvil had been hovering on the borderland of feverish delirium, where all is unreal, for weeks. Since the afternoon when the carriage-wheels of her mother had passed over her, the present had been blotted out. She was in her own home once more, she raved of her father, her pet birds, the garden. When fever consumed her she was in the foundry, the lava torrent of metal from the furnace mouth creeping nearer and nearer, threatening to ingulf her. Gradually this tumult of restless imagery subsided to a great calm. She wandered with San Donato, the mighty angel, in fields of lilies so vast that they seemed a sea of bloom. Then she became painfully aware of other shapes that bent over her, touched her. A man and a woman met at her side and clasped hands ; their faces were vaguely familiar. Rome had vanished, been obliterated ; she only wandered among the lilies, guided by a glorious angel, his robe rose-colored, with margin of gold, and a palm branch in his hand. Certainly she must have passed away to another world.

Henry Denvil, on receipt of that telegram, had

left Foundryville by the first train, overtaken an outward-bound steamer by means of a small boat, and traversed England and France without delay. Arrived at the apartment in Rome which bore his wife's name, he was met by her, a pale, distraught creature, who clung to him with hysterical sobs, and searched his face with anxious, terrified eyes.

"Is she dead?" he faltered, hoarsely.

"Oh no; but the surgeons think her limbs will be always useless, and she a cripple."

He soothed, but put her aside to seek his child instead. Augusta Denvil was conscious, for the first time, of a dull pang of jealousy. In the long and painful days which ensued Henry Denvil had eyes and thoughts only for Cecilia, while the latter, by one of those curious instincts of illness, would accept nothing from another hand after his arrival.

The mother's ordeal began earlier, and her waning youth had shrivelled in the anguish she was then compelled to endure. Cecilia, from the first, had been deaf to her mother's most tender tones, winced and screamed at the touch of her fingers, even when lying with closed eyes. Mrs. Denvil, in the awful and solemn watches of the night, read in this aversion the doom of retribution. Her spirit succumbed in the trial. The girl's foot might indeed have slipped and she been run over anywhere. True, but by her own mother's wheels!

Christmas morning, so glorious and bright with-

out, was gray and sober within this apartment of a family of strangers, where each face bore evidence of watching, care, grief.

Cecilia opened her eyes and glanced about her. She was lying on her own bed in her little chamber at Rome, only some sharp sword-thrust of circumstance had wholly severed her from the past. Her face was calm, almost solemn in expression. It seemed natural that her father should be sitting beside her holding her hand and striving to speak cheerfully. She was not startled by the fact that brother Jack stood at the foot of the bed. She noticed, entirely without responsive emotion, that her mother had concealed her face on father's shoulder, shaken by uncontrollable sobs. Her first words were :

" Where is San Donato ?"

Her family failed to understand her. Mademoiselle Durand, also tremulous and in tears, heard and hastened away to her own room. She returned with the little image.

" It is her fancy," murmured the governess.

Cecilia indicated by a gesture that it was to be placed in her father's hands. Mr. Denvil held it carefully, while the invalid gazed steadfastly at her saint. They waited for her next words in silence and suspense. The joy of a convalescent is seldom demonstrative. She did not speak again for an hour. Then she exclaimed suddenly, in stronger tones :

" It is Christmas day and papa has come."

Henry Denvil bent over and kissed the wasted little face, praying in his heart it might only be spared to him.

Jack looked on, stiff and ill at ease, after the manner of boys in a sick-chamber. He answered his father's inquiries in constrained and difficult English, with frequent lapses into French. Four years in a Swiss school had wrought wonders for Jack, especially as his mother had left him to take walking tours with his tutors during the summer vacations. A foreign education had been Mrs. Denvil's idea of preparation for life as an American citizen, especially at Foundryville.

There was another lapse into stillness before Cecilia's voice became again audible.

"If I had not—met with the accident on the Pincio, *would* you have come to Rome for Christmas?"

"I fear not, my child."

"Are we to go home with you now?"

"Yes."

Cecilia smiled and closed her eyes. Did she thus understand San Donato's message at last?

Madame Robin will not be installed as housekeeper in the master's house. In the future, Mrs. Denvil, with the reaction of a shallow nature, may make trips to better climates for her neuralgia, or Jack be absent at college; but Henry Denvil—nay, the very foundry—cannot be more constant to the spot than his daughter. There will be no balls for her, clad in satin, pearls and diamonds

twinkling in her hair and about her throat, no dancing days, no début in society as an heiress. Instead, Cecilia will flit from room to room of the long silent home in a wheel-chair, a presence bright, cheerful, watchful, now pausing in the sunny conservatory where each unfolding flower seems aware of her presence, now awaiting the father's return from work.

Above the entrance door will be enshrined the image of San Donato, guardian of the home, whose mission is to avert evil.

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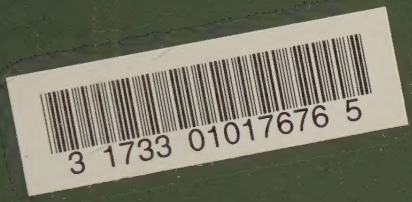
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